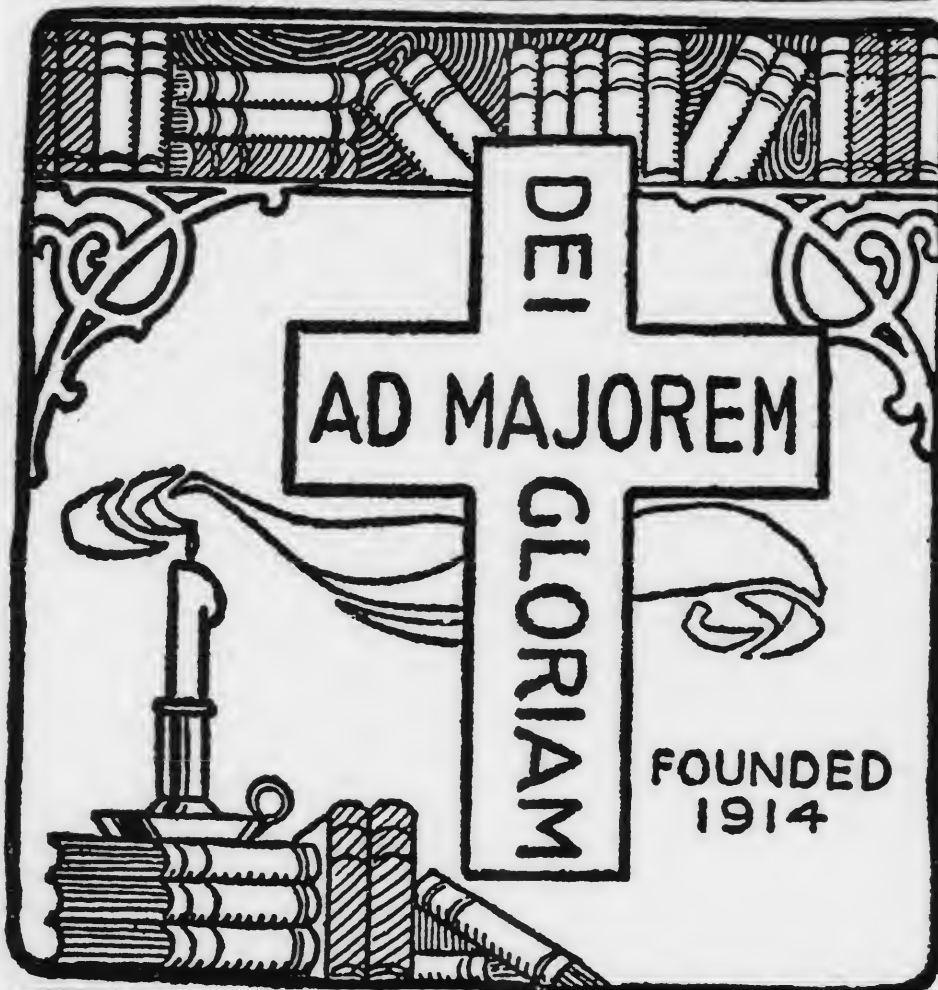


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SERMONS

BY THE LATE

MR. WILLIAM DAWSON,

OF BARNBOW, NEAR LEEDS.

WITH

A SKETCH OF THE AUTHOR,

BY

MR. R. A. WEST.

LONDON:

WILLIAM WALKER AND SON, 27, LUDGATE-STREET;
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SKETCH OF MR. WILLIAM DAWSON.*

THE Wesleyan Methodists, more than any other denomination, make systematic use of lay preachers. Many of these are men of superior talents, and of great usefulness: some of them have attained to extensive and almost universal popularity, even beyond the precincts of the Methodist Church, notwithstanding they have fixed residences, and are engaged in secular avocations. Mr. Dawson was one of these. Like the early apostles, he "laboured, working with his own hands," and was dependant upon his daily toil for the bread that perisheth. Yet he laboured diligently, and with extraordinary acceptance and success in the ministry of the word of reconciliation. The demand for Mr. Dawson's public services was very great, and whatever he could accomplish, with a due regard to his temporal duties, from which he did not consider that his call released him, he was ever willing to perform; and with his admirable system of economy of time—in which respect he resembled, in a remarkable degree, the founder of Methodism—he was able to accomplish about a hundred journeys every year. His labours were confined prin-

* This is a slight alteration of a sketch given of Mr. Dawson in America, by Robert A. West.

cipally, but not exclusively by any means, to the northern and western counties of England, where, in the teeming city and quiet village, in cathedral-like chapels and in barns, and in the open air, Mr. Dawson, *alias* "Billy Dawson," *alias* "The Yorkshire Farmer," zealously preached the glorious gospel of Christ, and was instrumental in making hundreds wise unto salvation.

I first heard Mr. Dawson from the pulpit in the year 1828. His apparel and demeanour struck me as unclerical. True, he wore a black coat and vest, and a white neck-cloth, an article of dress to which English clergymen, of all denominations, rigidly adhere; but his lower extremities were incased in a pair of drab breeches, and he wore what are technically called "top-boots," such as are, or were at that time, universally worn in England by substantial farmers as a part of their Sunday or market-day attire. He crossed the floor of the chapel, on his way to the pulpit, with a rolling gait, as though he were traversing a ploughed field, with a hand in each pocket of his "drabs," half-whistling, half-humming the air of a good old Methodist tune. Of this he was apparently unconscious, for his eyes were turned downward in a reverie, and he seemed shut in from all surrounding objects. In all my subsequent knowledge of Mr. Dawson, I never saw a repetition of the mood; nevertheless, slight prejudice was excited, in the mind of at least one in the congregation, which his peculiar style of prayer was not calculated to remove. No one who knew him would doubt that his was the sincere prayer of the heart; that he approached the throne of divine grace

with a full conviction of the solemnity of the employment; that he personally realized the obligation of the creature to the Creator—the dependance of the suppliant upon the goodness and mercy of God; and that he felt the yearning of the saint for communion with the Saviour. Still there was undeniably something in the manner of his approach to God in public prayer, which bore the appearance of irreverence, and was offensive to good taste. This, however, was only in the manner of the petitioner; it was but one of those channels through which his eccentric genius meandered, and it is not improbable that a conscientious effort to restrain its eccentricities made them more apparent,—just as the excessive curbing of a high-mettled horse only ruins its paces, and destroys the beauty of its action.

The writer, while subsequently resident at Leeds, in Yorkshire, had frequent opportunities of hearing Mr. Dawson preach, and of observing him in the almost daily routine of private life. No farmer attending the Leeds market had a higher reputation for commercial integrity than Mr. Dawson. His “word was ever as good as his bond;” whether he bought or sold, his representations were never doubted. Even worldly men regarded him as one who was “inflexible to ill, and obstinately just.” Perhaps this is the best place to say, that, although a bachelor, Mr. Dawson had others dependant upon him for support, especially a brother, who was incompetent to provide for himself. For the sake of this relative, he refused more than one opening in life congenial to his tastes, and promising great social and pecuniary advan-

tages. Moreover, at one time the farm he tenanted was understood to be a losing concern; and he was, for a long season, compelled to make great exertions, and exercise a rigid economy, to preserve his honour untainted before the world. Offers of pecuniary assistance were liberally made to him by the few friends who were aware of his trials, and who well knew his high principles; but his independent spirit declined the proffered aid, and prompted him to rely upon his own energies. Amid all this comparative adversity, he continued the zealous prosecution of his ministry, preaching generally twice, sometimes three times, on the Sabbath, without fee or reward. Not a sixpence did he ever receive beyond his travelling expenses; and when from any unforeseen contingency the collection has been smaller than was anticipated, he evinced the greatest pain, on taking his departure, at receiving even these. His ministerial labours were eminently disinterested.

Circumstances led to personal acquaintance with Mr. Dawson; and as the writer's place of business was near the corn market, Mr. Dawson would generally call in for five minutes' chat. It was characteristic of the man, that if, on entering, he saw that I was occupied with others, he would immediately retire, merely greeting me by a dart of his eye; for that idea best conveys the peculiar, rapid, concentrated flash of meaning, which was ever and anon emitted from that window of his soul. Knowing the value of time, and how unprofitable were interruptions to a man engaged in business, he did unto others as he would they should do unto him, and was

the last man in the world of whom his friends could complain that he trenched upon their time or interrupted them in their business avocations. In frequent journeyings between Leeds and Manchester we also often met, and many were the pleasant conversations I had with him in those "good old days" of stage coach travelling. He was an agreeable companion, and where he could converse without restraint, would add greatly to the interest of his remarks by the narration of various incidents connected with his pulpit services. Once, as we were passing through one of the numerous villages thickly scattered in the manufacturing districts around Huddersfield and Dewsbury, he pointed out the Wesleyan Chapel, and related a circumstance connected with it, which, as it aptly illustrates the manner and effects of his preaching, may be properly repeated here.

Mr. Dawson was delivering a discourse peculiarly suited to his genius; one that will be long remembered in many towns and villages of England. It was generally known to be one of his favourite sermons, and passed under the title of "Death on the pale horse;"—the first in this volume. It was a discourse of a startling and impressive character. In bold and striking imagery, in powerful, thrilling, irresistible appeal, it was unsurpassed by any sermon I have ever listened to. When the preacher was happy in its delivery, the congregation seemed to suspend their very breathing in the intensity of their attention, and in the pauses of the preacher's voice, a long and deep inspiration was resorted to as a relief. On the occasion referred to, Mr. Dawson was indulging in that peculiarly

vivid imagery, which was at the basis of his popularity, and exclaimed, “‘Come and see!’ the sinner is in the broad road to ruin—every step takes him nearer to hell and further from heaven. Onward, onward he is going—death and hell are after him—quickly, untiringly, they pursue him—with swift but noiseless hoof the pale horse and his pale rider are tracking the godless wretch. See! see! they are getting nearer to him—they are overtaking him!” At this moment the stillness of the congregation was so complete, that the ticking of the clock could be distinctly heard in every part of the chapel. Upon this, with a facility peculiarly his own, he promptly seized, and without seeming interruption. Leaning over the pulpit in the attitude of attention, and fixing his keen eye upon those who sat immediately before him, he continued, in an almost supernatural whisper, “Hark! hark!—that swift rider is coming, and judgment is following him. That is his untiring footstep! Hark!”—and then imitating, for a moment or two, the beat of the pendulum, he exclaimed in the highest pitch of his voice, “Lord save the sinner! save him! Death is upon him, and hell follows! See, the bony arm is raised! The fatal dart is poised! O my God! save him—save him—for if death strikes him he falls, and hell receives him, and as he falls, he shrieks, ‘Lost! *lost!* LOST! Time lost! Sabbaths lost! means lost! soul lost! heaven lost! ALL LOST, and lost for ever!’” The effect was so overwhelming, that two of the congregation fainted, and it required all the preacher’s tact and self-command to

ride through the storm which his own vivid imagination and powerful appeal had aroused.

Perhaps somewhat apocryphal, yet generally received as true, is a story of his preaching at Pudsey, a village inhabited by woollen cloth weavers, some five or six miles from Leeds, from the history of David slaying Goliath. He was indulging freely in the pictorial representation, of which he was so perfect a master. Personating David, he had struck down the boasting Philistine, and stepping back in the pulpit, he cast his eye downward, and commenced a strain of irony, which had the twofold effect of rebuking every one that exalted himself against the Lord, and of adding force to the graphic picture he had already given of the conflict. So powerfully did the speaker depict the conqueror's emotion, so rapidly and continuously did he heap taunt upon taunt on his prostrate foe, that the congregation seemed to lose sight of the actual state of things in the ideal, and waited in breathless suspense for the catastrophe. Some in the gallery, in the intensity of the excitement, leaned forward, as though they expected to see, upon the floor of the pulpit, the prostrate giant with the stripling's foot upon his breast; and one person, unable longer to bear the suspense, gave vent to his feelings by exclaiming in the broad dialect of the county, "*Off with his head, Billy.*" This interruption moved Mr. Dawson for a moment from his propriety, otherwise it would scarcely have been noticed by the congregation, so oblivious were they of outward things in their rapt attention to the preacher. I have no doubt of the truth

of the anecdote, having myself seen and felt similar excitement under the same sermon; and have a strong impression also that Mr. Dawson acknowledged its truth in my hearing, coupled with the remark that he ever after refused applications to preach at Pudsey, for prudential reasons. He feared that his vivid fancy would recall the circumstance, with such concomitants as would disturb his gravity.

Such was the command which Mr. Dawson held over his congregation when in his happiest mood, that instances of equal excitement were not rare, though they did not equally result in such marked demonstration. His sermons, though sometimes crude, always presented bold, original, startling, and oftentimes beautiful, ideas. The impression made upon the hearer was, that the preacher was more indebted to the vigour of his genius than to the extent of his reading, and that all his matter was hewn out of the quarry of his own mind. He was an extemporaneous, and it might be added, to a great extent, an impromptu preacher, though a new thought, or even a felicitous expression, seized upon during the delivery of a discourse, was almost sure to be incorporated in the same sermon on a future occasion. It was amusing, to one familiar with the art of public speaking, to observe how perseveringly he would sometimes chase a new idea, started under the inspiration of the moment, or suggested by some collocation of words, or other accidental circumstance. Uttering several sentences of the most common-place character, so as to leave his mind free for the pursuit, he would struggle after the idea

which, perhaps as yet "without form and void," gleamed before him. For a few brief moments those who did not know him, or who did not surmise his purpose, would be distressed at his seeming embarrassment, and be apprehensive of a "break down," when suddenly making a vigorous spring, he would seize the object of his pursuit, his eye flashing with triumph, and rapidly moulding the truant thought into the most forcible form of expression, would make it flash upon the congregation in a perfect blaze of light. This peculiarity was sometimes indulged in during public prayer. I remember an instance which will fully illustrate my meaning. Mr. Dawson was acknowledging the divine goodness, and quoted the passage, "Thou hast crowned my head with loving kindness and tender mercies." His imagination took fire at the metaphor, and presented before him a regal coronet, studded with numerous gems, having a centre-stone of surpassing magnitude, brilliancy, and value. Consentaneously this became the "crown" of "loving-kindness and tender mercies." The countless brilliants represented the blessings of Providence and grace, and the centre-stone the "priceless gem of salvation." To express this as he wished was more difficult than to conceive it; and several feeble sentences were uttered before this "crown" was shown to the people. But when at length it was exhibited in all its radiant glory, with its centre-gem of purest lustre, the "deep crimson hue" of which was caught up and reflected in a thousand lights by the precious stones which clustered around it, the "saints of the Most High shouted aloud for joy."

There was great inequality in Mr. Dawson's preaching; and when he failed, it was generally by going a step beyond the sublime. One instance in particular just occurs to me. A few years before his death he was somewhat heavy and bulky in appearance, and wore a dark brown wig, which he was in the habit of frequently adjusting with both his hands. He was preaching on a Sabbath evening to a crowded congregation in Brunswick Chapel, Leeds. The interior of the chapel is oval, the organ and orchestra behind the pulpit, which is a capacious mahogany structure, isolated, standing forward from the orchestra, and is ascended by a circular stair. Mr. Dawson was preaching from—"Behold I stand at the door and knock;" and after a powerful delineation of the methods by which the Holy Spirit appeals to the heart of the sinner with overtures of mercy, and the rejection of those offers by the impenitent, he approached the climax of his subject—that the Holy Ghost might *at that hour* be "knocking at the door for the *last time*." Fearful was the picture which he drew of the condition of the man who was in such a case. Then suddenly pausing, and personating the third person in the Trinity, he rapped with his knuckles first upon the open, then upon the closed Bible, the significance of which the reader will appreciate, accompanying each with an appeal in the first person for admission to the sinner's heart. Assuming that the sinner was immovable in his refusal, and still preserving the personation, Mr. Dawson turned away from the front of the pulpit, and walked slowly toward the door, through which he passed to the verge

of the platform, at the top of the stairs, repeating, "*Because I have called,*" &c., and kindred passages and sentiments in a tone of passionate regret. Had it not been for the intense solemnity and feeling which his previous remarks had inspired, the effect would have been most disastrous, and even with those advantages, it was impossible to prevent the rising of an unpleasant feeling, as the hearer contemplated the personation of the divine Spirit, and that, by one whose unethereal form threw a visible burlesque upon the movement. And then, too, there was the difficulty of returning after a last appeal, which could only be accomplished at the expense of consistency.

Errors of this sort, however, were but the exceptions to Mr. Dawson's general success; and even these were redeemed by the unmistakeable evidences which his ministry always afforded of the presence and power of God. Nor was the wondrous effect of his preaching transient only. While he might, as a preacher, be justly called a revivalist, yet his ministry was not so much remarkable for awakening a general excitement as it was for producing individual conviction. His bold and vivid imagery alarmed the conscience; and then by some sudden stroke of genius he would set before the sinner his transgression in so strong a light, that the poor rebel felt his peril, and knew no rest until he had made his peace with God.

Injustice would be done to Mr. Dawson were I to omit saying, that on all doctrinal points, as held by the Wesleyan Methodists, he was not only perfectly orthodox

but always declared those doctrines with great clearness and force. I shall ever remember a sermon which he preached in Irwell-street Chapel, Salford, (Manchester,) on the atonement of Christ, in which that cardinal truth in all its fulness and sufficiency was set forth with remarkable perspicuity. And this was not done by laboured and protracted argument, but by the flashes of light which his genius poured upon the subject, and which at once both enlightened and convinced the understanding of the hearer.

In the evening of the same day, I heard from him a sermon which was equally a favourable specimen of his powerful appeals to sinners. He represented the sinner as forging a chain, link by link, as he committed sin after sin; in vain his friends warned him that this chain was to be heated red-hot and wrapped round his body, and to be kept there day after day, week after week, and month after month; he still went on forging it, even taking pleasure in so doing. Raising his voice, and increasing it in volume with every sentence, Mr. Dawson exclaimed, "Sinner, thou art the man! and at the day of judgment that chain shall be drawn, at white heat, out of the flames of hell, and shall be wrapped round, and *round*, and **ROUND**, (raising his voice at each repetition,) thy writhing body; burning into thy wretched soul, until, long before the coil is exhausted, its weight shall sink thee under the surface of that burning lake for ever and for ever!" Again he represented the sinner as made fast to one end of a chain coiled round a windlass placed over the mouth of a deep pit, with a heavy weight attached to

the other end. The windlass was set in motion, the weight increasing in velocity on its way downward, the man drawing nearer and nearer to the mouth of the pit, the weight becoming still more and more rapid in its motion,—the preacher shouting out as the head seemed to be whirling with the machinery—"He is going!—he is going!—there is no stopping him!—he is nearer—nearer—the final step is taken—he dashes over, disappears—and the splash startles the very devils!" Never shall I forget the thrill of horror that pervaded the congregation; the effect, which cannot be conceived without a knowledge of the man and his manner of delivering such passages, was beyond anything I ever before experienced. The imagery, which of course was more fully wrought out, was terrific. The "weight" was the accumulated transgressions of the sinner; the "chain" the perfections of the divine character all harmonizing in the destruction of the impenitent; and the "windlass," the constant revolution of time, to which "Stop" might be cried in vain. The reverse of the picture, and its application to believers, was equally effective.

I suppose that, as a preacher, Mr. Dawson never appeared so great as when he preached the funeral sermon of the late Rev. David Stoner, whom he loved as David loved Jonathan, and venerated for his piety and usefulness. As the occasion led him to sketch the character of his deceased friend, he seemed to catch the falling mantle, and, inspired by his theme, was led even beyond himself, and rose to the highest elevation of

overpowering eloquence. The occasion will be remembered to the latest hour of the last surviving hearer, and the full fruit will only be gathered when human instrumentality shall have completed its mission. Many were quickened into a holier zeal for the salvation of their fellow-men, and the constantly widening influence of their increased devotion will be perpetuated through all time. A sketch of the concluding remarks on that memorable occasion may be found in Mr. Everett's Memoir of Dawson to which I must refer the reader. Mr. E. mentions that the preacher's inquiry, "Is there no young man in this congregation willing to take up the fallen trumpet?" entered the soul of one lovely youth, Samuel Entwisle, a son of the Rev. Joseph Entwisle, who had for some time been under the impression that God required him to enter the ministry. I may add, that had that young man's life been spared, he would have been an ornament to the Wesleyan ministry. I knew him long before he entered upon the work, as we were residents for some years of my youth in the same town, worshipped in the same sanctuary, and frequently spent more or less time together. He long entertained the conviction that he was called of God to the work of the ministry, and was only deterred from obeying "the heavenly vision" by his overwhelming sense of the responsibility resting upon the ministerial character and office, and a fear lest he should unworthily discharge its duties. He was naturally, too, of a retiring disposition, which doubtless had its influence in causing him to shrink from so public a vocation; and

thus, from a fear of running before he was sent, he brought darkness upon his soul, and recovered his lost ground only by strong cries and tears in secret before the Lord. If Mr. Dawson wrought no other good effect than that of working decision in the mind of Mr. Entwisle, his labour had indeed not been in vain in the Lord. This one fruit was strong evidence of the natural force and spiritual unction that attended Mr. Dawson's ministry, for Mr. Entwisle, though young, was almost the last man to be moved by mere declamation, or appeal in the absence of terse and cogent argument.

If Mr. Dawson is to be seen in all his greatness, he must be viewed in yet other aspects—as a platform speaker, as a member of the social circle, and in the ordinary routine of his busy life. His popularity as a platform speaker equalled his popularity as a preacher. His speeches had each a distinctive topic,—he seldom generalized,—and each had its popular name. There was his “Reform bill” speech, which, by the way, I do not remember to have heard, and only know by repute, which gave it a high character for originality and effectiveness; and his “Railway” speech, for which he was most severely handled in the editorial columns of the *Morning Herald* newspaper, where he was charged with the grossest irreverence and kindred crimes. It is charitable to suppose that they knew not the man, and could not appreciate his genius, or his talents—that in truth they “understood neither what they said, nor whereof they affirmed.” Mr. Dawson always readily seized upon any passing and exciting topic, and turned it to good account;

and when the subject of Railways engrossed general attention, he made it pay tribute to his platform labours. The track was the world, the train was the gospel, the chief director was Jesus Christ, and so forth. The speech was very popular, but it cannot be denied that in some points it bordered closely upon burlesque, and it was only by his skilful management that the engine was saved from running off the track." Then there was his "Clock" speech, in which every wheel, and spring, and screw, was emblematical of some part of the missionary agency; and the "Sower," and the "Telescope" speech, through which he would survey the world, and on entering upon each branch of his subject, would elevate his half-clenched hand to his eye, as we do when looking from a distance into the depths and details of a picture, and exclaim, "And then, sir, when I look again through my telescope, what do I see?" and thus would enter upon the survey of each new field. And then there was his "Miser," and, best of all, his "Harvest home." That was THE speech. In it he never failed. Upon that subject he was perfectly at home. The genius of the man was enriched by the experience gained from his daily occupation. The ingenuity displayed in the construction of the speech was only equalled by the copious and beautiful illustrations which clustered around every point; and the effect was invariably the diffusion of a holy joy throughout the audience, which not only produced a beneficial result in the matter of the collection, but left the savour of a heavenly influence upon the heart, the fruit of which was often seen after many days.

Before I leave Mr. Dawson's public character, I may just advert to his occasional introductory remarks on the hymns which he selected. The English preachers always line their hymns, the congregation singing each two lines as they are given out from the pulpit. The plan has some advantages. The congregation always stand up when they sing the praises of God, neither do they allow the choir to monopolize that delightful employment. The minister would feel jealous over his people with a godly jealousy, if, in any part of divine worship, they could silently sit and listen to a display of choral singing. I do not mean to say that the congregation always sing as heartily as is desirable. In seasons of spiritual apathy and general lukewarmness—for the extent to which the congregation unite in the vocal praises of God is a sort of barometer of their spiritual state—the people are apt to be equally apathetic in the matter of public singing; and it was on such occasions that Mr. Dawson would avail himself of the opportunity presented by lining the hymns, to introduce some remark calculated to arouse their dormant affections, and excite them to a more fervent devotion. Thus, on one occasion, he had selected the hymn commencing,—

“Jesus, thy blood and righteousness
My beauty are, my glorious dress.”

Before giving out the last verse, he briefly observed, that he had often been struck with the beauty of the communion service of the Church of England, where the priest says, “Lift up your hearts,” and the people respond, “We lift them up unto the Lord;” the ex-

hortation and response being repeated, the priest concludes with—"It is very meet, right, and our bounden duty, that we should at all times and in all places give thanks unto Thee, O Lord, holy Father, almighty and everlasting God." Then suddenly glancing his eye around the chapel, he exclaimed, in an elevated tone of voice, "'Lift up your hearts,' yea, and let the whole congregation repeat, 'We lift them up unto the Lord,'" instantly announcing,

"Thou God of power, thou God of love,
Let the whole world thy mercy prove;
Now let thy word o'er all prevail,
Now take the spoils of death and hell."

The power of sound was immediately quadrupled—the flame of devotion caught, and spread, and glowed during the whole of the service.

On another occasion, after he had given out, and the congregation had sung,

"True 'tis a strait and thorny road,
And mortal spirits tire and faint;"

he inquired, "Why do they tire? Is it because the road is strait and thorny? No—

'But they forget the mighty God,
That feeds the strength of every saint.'"

Thus, gliding into the succeeding lines without suffering the congregation to feel any interruption by the break, while he furnished them with a subject for reflection, showing them that they should "sing with the understanding."

In the social circle Mr. Dawson was always cheerful,

even to playfulness, and always instructive; his remarks were distinguished by much shrewdness, and were indicative of a close observation of men and things. He was very happy in extricating himself, when sometimes placed in an awkward position by the questioning of injudicious or thoughtless friends. On one occasion, being asked his opinion of a preacher, from whose sermons little could be extracted for home meditation, he promptly replied, "I eat what I can, but pocket nothing." An instance of his happy manner of administering reproof, and taking the scales off a man's eyes, occurs to me. Some one was complaining to him that he could get no good at the revival meetings; that he went up into the gallery, and looked down upon the people, and the sight of so much disorder neutralized the good effects of the sermon. "Ah," said Mr. Dawson, "you mounted to the top of the house, and on looking down your neighbour's chimney to see what kind of a fire he kept, the smoke got into your eyes and blinded you. Had you entered the room by the door, and mingled with the family around the hearth, you would have enjoyed the benefit of the fire as well as they. Sir, *you have got the smoke in your eyes.*"

I have said that Mr. Dawson was a local preacher, though, as he himself facetiously observed, he was a "TRAVELLING *local* preacher." It may not perhaps be generally known, that in the year 1802 he was proposed by the Rev. Mr. Barber, to the quarterly meeting at Leeds, for the itinerancy, unanimously approved, accepted by the following Conference, and his name put

down for Wetherby, Yorkshire, in connection with the Rev. Robert Pilter. Some circumstances of a temporal character, which, he feared, would affect his aged mother's interests and mar her comforts, eventually induced him to remain at home. Within two or three years of his death, a number of friends, in order to relieve him of his daily toil, and secure the full benefit of his services to the connexion, started a project by which they hoped to raise a fund, the interest of which should support him during his life, and pass to his brother in case he survived Mr. Dawson; the principal to revert to the Wesleyan Missionary Society at the expiration of the two lives. Unfortunately, the managers of the project decided to limit each individual subscription, or any amount of money would have been subscribed in a few days; with this limitation the scheme partially failed.

Mr. Dawson was a bachelor. He made more than one "offer" of marriage when in his maturer years. In each case the lady selected was highly intellectual and of most refined manners, and probably the proposal was more the result of mental, intellectual admiration, than of any softer emotion. In each case, too, the lady was distinguished for fervent but enlightened piety.

Of his personal appearance I have said but little. I cannot do better than close this sketch by adopting Mr. Everett's portrait, for it is very like: "It was that of a man—a man in the most manly sense of the term. He was strong of bone, muscular, well-built, well-rounded, proportionate, standing about five feet nine inches, had hair of a deep auburn, and a complexion approaching the

embrowned rather than the dark. His eye, of a lightish gray, with a dark pupil, was round, keen, full of fire, and well set in the head, mounted with overhanging eyebrows. The face, too, was round—somewhat full; the ears small, thick, and closely attached to the head; a good mouth, with a somewhat biting expression, similar to what is found in some of the portraits of Sir Walter Scott; and an excellent forehead, covered in later life with false hair, ill adapted to the head, and overhanging the fine *sinciput* like an eave of thatch. The features might be pronounced regular, but expressive, inclining to the fierce, on the eye being fixed—full of meaning, and conveying the expression of thought—that thought which is brilliant, active, and penetrating, which only himself could seize, and which others could neither tame nor break.”

DAWSON'S SERMONS.

SERMON I.

DEATH ON THE PALE HORSE.

“And when he had opened the fourth seal, I heard the voice of the fourth beast say, Come and see. And I looked and behold a pale horse; and his name that sat on him was Death, and Hell followed with him.”—REVELATIONS vi. 7, 8.

THE Revelation given to St. John, is certainly a very important and interesting part of sacred writ. The three first chapters cannot be read by any believer without interest of a peculiar kind. There our Lord appears in his exalted character, as the head and Saviour of the church; he appears with his eyes brighter than the sun; and his character is, to “search the heart, and try the reins of the children of men.” The peculiar observations which he makes upon the churches, and the addresses which are given to those churches, cannot be read by any enlightened mind, or by any regenerated heart, without particular interest. A few of the latter chapters of the Revelation, then, deserve our attention particularly; for there, in some measure, eternity itself is opened to us; and we see, as far as humanity can, the torments of hell and the joys of heaven. In the middle part of the Revelation, there are hieroglyphics and characters of prophecy which we do not fully understand; and in many cases,

those hieroglyphics and representations which are brought before us, are only what ceremonial observances were to the Jews; they are shadows and realities, but they are realities which we do not see at present; and we shall only know the import of the shadows, when we see the whole width and breadth of the reality. There are some persons who have a natural talent for explaining those peculiarities. They never seem to be at home but when they are breaking seals, and pouring vials, and blowing trumpets. That seems to be their element. It is neither my taste, nor my talent. A pious clergyman once said to me, "Mr. Dawson, what do you think about the figures in the Revelation?" I said, "I do not think much about them, Sir; I see some very fine theories founded upon them. In times past, when young, I have seen the number of the beasts, and the riders of the beasts, and the downfall of popery, all very nicely described; but, then, where are all these fine figures, which have been founded upon them, realized?" I do not care much about figures; I shall not break seals, pour vials, or blow trumpets; I blow no trumpet but that of salvation to every penitent believer.

I grant, my friends, there is a peculiar period to which this chapter refers. It is a period, when there is to be an awful mortality of the human race, on the face of the earth. That might have been the case, that may be the case. It will be my endeavour to improve these words, and accommodate them to our present and our everlasting advantage. I will give a short exemplification of the times to which I apply them, and then deduce from them, or graft upon them, some important facts.

Here we see a *rider* mentioned; and the name of the rider is called *Death*. You know that peculiar, that awful, that certain period, when a man ceases to breathe,

to look, to speak, to think, to act, as regards his body—the season when the spirit takes its flight from its poor frail tenement of clay, and enters into the unseen world—that awful period is called death. That period is frequently personified, as many other things are understood through personification and figure, and death is sometimes called “a minister.” Death is frequently called “a king.” St. Paul says this king reigns; and he reigns over all the human race. By Job this rider is called “a king.” It would have been a very awful appellation, to have given to death, to have called it a terrible king. My friends, he is not merely a terrible king, but he is a king of terrors, to certain characters. The rider is the personification of that period, to which we are all hastening. How far, or how near that period is, we cannot tell; but we are perpetually approaching it.

Then there is the *horse* that he rides upon: “And I looked, and beheld a pale horse.” Those diseases which precede and attend death, will soon take the finest bloom from the countenance, and the fairest blush that ever sat upon it, and turn the finest countenance pale; so that it is a very common phrase, when a person is dying, that he turns his pale face towards the wall. Death rides, then, the pale horse.

Then there are, *his followers*: “And his name who sat on him was Death, and Hell followed with him.” The meaning which is applied to this by all divines is, that Hades followed with him; that is, the unseen world, where separate spirits exist—exist in a way which we can have no idea of at present; but it is an unseen world of glory, where they enter into rest, and continue remaining in the mansions until the morning of the resurrection, and then the body and soul are united together, and enter into the perfect rest which God will

give to his people. Heaven is the Hades of the righteous. Hell, in the literal and common acceptation of the term, hell is the Hades of the sinful. One of the most able treatises that a man ever wrote—at least as far as I feel interested—was by John Howe, upon this text, “I have the keys of death and hell.” Now Jesus Christ here has the keys of the unseen world. He has the keys of hell; and he opens and no man can shut. When the soul enters into eternity, it must stay there, for no man can bring it out; and he shuts and no man can open.

My brethren, it is an important fact that we do not cease to live when we cease to breathe. We only begin to live properly, as spiritual beings, and immaterial, and immortal beings,—we only begin to live, when we die; and we begin to live in a higher or in a lower state of existence,—in a state of misery or happiness.

Then what are the important truths which we may deduce from these observations, or at least graft upon them. *One* is this, that the pale horse and his rider set out after us as soon as we were born; that they are perpetually gaining ground on us, and must sooner or later overtake us. The *second* is this, that though it is absolutely certain they will and must overtake us, it is awfully uncertain when they will overtake us. *Thirdly*, this truth appears to rise to our notice, that when this rider and his horse overtake us, he will strike the blow, and nothing will prevent it. *Fourthly*, that to certain characters, in the common acceptation of the term, that blow will be attended with tremendous consequences. *Lastly*, we consider, as to the characters in this congregation, in the presence of God, whether, if death were to overtake them, hell would follow with it. And then we will conclude with an application.

I. The *first* truth is, that THIS HORSE AND HIS RIDER SET OUT AFTER US AS SOON AS WE WERE BORN; THAT THEY ARE PERPETUALLY GAINING GROUND ON US, AND THEREFORE SOONER OR LATER THEY MUST OVERTAKE US. They must overtake you, my friends; because, if you look at this horse and his rider, you will find that he has got your death-warrant in his hand. The rider of this horse is coming after us, and he has got our death-warrant signed by the King of kings and Lord of lords. "The soul that sinneth, it shall die." "In the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die." "It is appointed"—it is a decree of God—"it is appointed for all men once to die." He has got God's decree in his hand; therefore he is sure to overtake us. Then he must overtake us, because we have the principles of death in our composition. Life is very properly compared to a lamp. The oil is nearly expended; and while the lamp is burning, day is increasing, and light is decreasing; so that the very principle of life, or the principle of death, are like lighted candles, which begin to shorten and burn away as soon as we are born.

"Our life is nothing but our death begun
Our cradles rock us nearer to the tomb."

"Whate'er we do, where'er we be,
We're travelling to the grave."

This rider is sure to overtake us. In the language of Blair, he—

"Like a staunch murderer, steady to his purpose,
Pursues us close through every lane of life;
Nor misses once his track, but presses on:
Till, forced at last to the tremendous verge,
At once we sink to everlasting ruin."

O may this truth more deeply live in our hearts! so that we may prepare to meet him when he overtakes us.

II. IT IS AWFULLY UNCERTAIN WHEN HE WILL OVERTAKE US. "At such an hour as ye think not, the Son of Man cometh." We do not know when he will come. Sometimes he comes in the morning; sometimes at noon; sometimes in the middle of the day; sometimes in the afternoon. Some few number fourscore years, but very few, before he overtakes them, and strikes his blow. We do not always hear his footsteps. The rider sometimes rides into our houses, and we do not hear the footsteps of his horse; and he strikes his blow. So it was with the rich man, who said, "Soul, thou hast much good laid up for many years; take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry." And, behold, the rider of the horse was in the room with him; and when he talked about "many years," he struck his blow, and said, "Thou fool, *this night* thy soul shall be required of thee." It is awfully uncertain, therefore, when he will overtake us.

III. It is equally certain, that WHEN HE DOES OVERTAKE US HE WILL STRIKE HIS BLOW, AND NOTHING CAN PREVENT IT. I say he has our death-warrant in his hand, from the King of kings and Lord of lords; and when he gets his commission he will serve that death-warrant, and nothing can prevent it; he will strike his blow, and nothing can avert it. Yonder is a young creature, just rising in the spring of day, in the bloom of life, in the morning of her years. If he has got a death-warrant, he will execute it. She may cry, "Spare me; I am but young; I am not prepared to die; I have not considered about it; I can wish to live a little longer. Spare me, death." Will death spare? The eyes of the rider are blind to beauty, and his ears are deaf to entreaty. He executes his commission, and down the young creature goes, enclosed in a coffin, to the tomb: and the beauty, and the bloom of youth is not spared.

He will come into kings' houses as well as paupers'. He will come into the habitations of princes; nothing can avert or avoid his blow; and he will serve his warrant upon a prince as well as a pauper. Riches cannot bribe him. So it was with the rich man. He thought he had goods laid up for many years; but his goods not being laid up above, his riches profited him not in the day of death. Death struck his blow; and down the man came that night.

Again: the natural acquirements that a man may possess cannot evade or avoid this rider; he will overtake him, and strike his blow, though he had all the wisdom of Solomon. Solomon, with all his wisdom, could not find out the way to avoid this rider, and evade the blow of this rider. There is a great deal said at this day about the march of intellect. Yes; but intellect with all its march, never out-marches death. He marches faster than intellect, and he will soon overtake. Notwithstanding the march of intellect, none ever yet found out a way by which they could avoid the blow of this rider. Nor, my brethren, can the greatest peace, holiness, and usefulness prevent it. Let a believer be "justified by faith;" let him have "peace with God;" let him be "sanctified throughout body, soul, and spirit;" let him have perfect enjoyment of the perfect love of God; and let him be the holiest man upon earth—if it were possible, as useful as St. Paul, or as holy as Jesus Christ—neither his holiness nor usefulness can prevent the blow of the last enemy. If the rider gets his commission, he will serve it upon the father of a family. There the father lies on the bed of death, and his partner sits at the bed-head,

"That awful post of observation,"
and cries—"Spare my husband! Who shall share my

sorrows, and endeavour to lessen them—who shall share and endeavour to increase my joys, when he is gone? Spare my husband!” The children cry—“Spare our father! If he dies, where shall we find a father’s eye to watch over us, and a father’s heart to yearn over us, and a father’s hand to provide for us, and a father’s love to love us. Spare our father!” No; the rider gets his commission, and, notwithstanding the deep anxiety of the partner, and the wishes of the children, the blow is struck.

I remember when I was a young man, eighteen years of age, my poor father died. I was the eldest of six. I remember the awful period, when he was sickening, to this very day. In the morning, I met my mother coming out of the chamber; I enquired what sort of night my father had passed; and then I looked at her face as an index. Sometimes after a comfortable night, there was a sunshine upon the countenance; sometimes after a restless night, I could see a cloud and gloom upon it. But death got his commission, and he struck his blow.

But there is one thing which may be said, though it is a digression. If he takes the father, he will not leave the children fatherless; if he takes the father, he will not leave the widow without a husband. “God is a father of the fatherless, and a judge to the widows.”

My dear friends, you see that to certain characters this blow will be attended with dreadful consequences; I mean in the common acceptation of the term. “I looked and beheld a pale horse, and his name that sat on him was Death, and Hell followed with him.” To certain characters, whom you see drop into the unseen world, the consequences will be tremendous. When he strikes the blow upon those characters, whatever pleasure there might have been in the relation of father, or

husband, or brother, or friend, they shall snap asunder, and there shall never be a stream of happiness run through that channel again.

Whatever enjoyment a man may have, not only in his social character, but in his providential circumstances, when the rider strikes his blow, he shall enjoy those temporal mercies no more; he shall be cut off from them and be united to them no more. Whatever privileges that man may enjoy, (in a spiritual sense we all enjoy privileges,) whatever privileges he may enjoy in a land such as that in which we live—the equal to which is not to be found in all the world, in its spiritual privileges—when the rider strikes his blow, he must leave the world, with all its glories, and privileges, and honours, and enjoyments. No more Christian Sabbaths; no more Christian ordinances; no more strivings of the Spirit of God. Whatever may be his privileges, when death strikes the blow upon such a character, he must be cut off from those privileges, never to enjoy them again; and as he is cut off from all means of salvation, he must be cut off from all hope of salvation. He is sent to a world where there is no hope. When death strikes his blow, the soul of such a character enters into the unseen world, and the unseen world to the poor sinner is a place of deep, and dismal, and increasing, and eternal woe. Exquisite misery that never was described—fire, and brimstone, and torment—shall be felt by that poor creature, when death strikes his blow.

O, my friends, to certain characters I solemnly say, this blow will be attended with tremendous consequences. Is any individual present saying “Am I that character?” If to certain characters that blow will be attended with such dreadful consequences, as the exclusion from all happiness, and the plunging into the depths of all woe,

surely every individual is laying his hand upon his heart, and saying, "Is it I? Is it I?"

IV. WHO THEN ARE THE CHARACTERS, THAT, WHEN DEATH STRIKES THE BLOW, WILL DROP INTO HELL, IN THE LITERAL SENSE OF THE WORD?

There are four. Those who have never broken off their sins by true repentance. Die as you are, and you will be lost. Those who have not a personal interest in Jesus Christ by faith; die as you are, and you will be lost. Those who have not experienced the regenerating influence of God; die as you are, without being born again, and you will be lost. Those who did once run well, but who have now ceased to run well, who were once in the way of life, and are now in the way of death; you, poor backslider, if you die as you are, you are the man.

Now, my dear friends, my subject is at its crisis; it is coming home now to personal work—"Is it I?" "If the rider overtakes me to-night, shall I be saved or lost? will hell follow with him?" My friend, have you broken off your sins by repentance? You know the word of God says, "The soul that sinneth, it shall die." "The wages of sin is death." The Judge says, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except ye repent ye shall perish." He commandeth men everywhere to repent. In order to avoid hell following death, or attending upon death, hear the voice of him crying in the wilderness, "Repent, the kingdom of heaven is at hand." When Herod cut poor John's throat, so that he could not speak any longer, our Lord took up the sound: "Repent, and believe the gospel!" Without repentance, you know, you live in sin; the power and love of sin is in your heart. Every individual here, if he has never repented of sin, has the power and love of sin in his heart; and how can you

suppose for a moment that a man who has the love of sin in him, and who is without repentance, can go to heaven? Can you think, that you, in your impenitent condition, are safe; and that if death and the rider should overtake you now, and strike you dead in your pew, you would go from this chapel to heaven? Lord, pour down thy spirit upon every impenitent sinner! It is thy word; exalt it! I plead thine office. Exalted Prince and Saviour! give repentance and remission of sins.

Repentance, then, is absolutely necessary; but, at the same time, you know repentance is not the condition of salvation: it must be by faith. "He that believeth not the Son shall not see life;" (thus saith our Lord;) "but the wrath of God abideth on him." "He that believeth not is condemned already." "He that believeth not shall be damned."

You know, as far as natural things can illustrate spiritual ones, repentance pays no debt. A man has contracted to pay one thousand pounds, and goes to the person, and says, "I repent, I do assure you; I seriously repent; I cannot sleep at night; I wet my pillow upon one side, and then turn it on the other; I do repent that I ever incurred the debt." "Well," says he, "that may be, but that does not pay me my debt. Your soaking your pillow with tears, I do not dispute; but that does not at all meet my demand. I want a thousand pounds of you." "Yes; I promise you I will never add another shilling to it." "Very well, you may do that; but does that pay the present debt?" The creditor is inexorable. "Then I suppose, sir, you intend to send me to prison." "Yes, I will have the money, or you must go to prison. That is quite a settled point." What does the poor man do? You see all his repentance is of no use; for repentance pays no debt. He goes home; and says, I am

a ruined man." He weeps over his poor wife and family, saying, "There is nothing but prison for me; to prison I must go; in prison I must die; for I have not the power to pay the debt, and I have an inexorable character to deal with, who says he will have the money or its worth, and I have nothing." And thus the poor man sinks. A neighbour goes to him, and sees his distressed situation, and says, "I was once as much in debt as you are. There is a kind gentleman in the neighbourhood, whose riches are immense; nobody knows how rich he is; but his riches cannot be exceeded even by his generosity. His generosity, if possible, is greater than his riches. When I was in your state I expected to go to prison. I went and stated my case to him; I told him the whole of my case; that if he would be such a kind unmerited friend as to interfere for me, I should consider myself under everlasting obligations to him; and that I would, indeed, give him all my heart could give, I would give my best thanks and love. And when I fully stated my case, and opened my heart, and told him I would give him my heart, he wrote a check to my creditor, and said to him, 'If this man owes thee anything, place it to my account;' and the creditor took the check, and said, 'It is all right; I have no demand upon you.' Now I am free; I am at liberty; I fear him not; and, therefore, I would advise you to go to this gentleman." This poor man's case being a desperate one, he goes and opens his case to this gentleman; and the gentleman hears his case, and sees his heart and his condition; and he gives him a check on his banker. The man goes with the check, and gets it discharged. And then what is his joy, and his love, think you!

O, my dear brethren, you know the moral of my parable. You know that we are all in debt; we owe ten

thousand talents; repentance will never pay the debt; the law says, "I will have my demand." But Jesus Christ possesses unsearchable riches, and his love is greater than his riches; and when the poor sinner is just going to prison, never to come out again, if he will go and state his case to Jesus Christ, and give up his heart to Christ, He will write him a check in his own blood, and say to the law, "If this man owes thee anything place it to my account;" and the debt is discharged.

Now you need not be one of the characters to which I have alluded. Although your sins are many, they can be forgiven; although they are black, they can be washed whiter than snow; although to certain characters, hell follows death, my heart says, not one of you need be such a character. Thus, my friends, we must be born again. I must love my God; I shall never be out of debt, until I give my heart, and my soul; and if I had ten thousand hearts, and loved Him ten thousand times more than this poor heart can do, I would then say, He ought to have ten thousand times ten thousand more loves than this heart can give.

O, poor backslider, if you die as you are, and the rider overtakes you, it will be sad work for you. He is coming! *he is coming!* HE IS COMING! and there is hell with him; and what sort of a hell will there be for you? Your crime is a seven-fold crime; and there is a seven-fold heated furnace for you. But have you never sought mercy? Pray to the Lord; and though you may be doubly in debt, through the unsearchable riches of Christ your double debt shall be discharged.

"Come and see," then, the awful condition of an unsaved sinner. Open your eyes, sinner, and see it yourself. There he is, in the broad road of ruin; every step he takes is deeper in sin; every breath he draws feeds his

corruption; every moment brings him farther from heaven, and nearer to hell; he is going, and there is death and hell after him. Sinner, your sins are unrepented of; you have never come to Jesus Christ; you are going, and there is death and hell after you. Come then, and see him in the high road to ruin. The horse and the rider are increasing in speed; they are coming quickly on, they are getting nearer and nearer; they are overtaking him! Can you bear the sight? "Come and see." If the rider overtakes that poor sinner unpardoned, and unsaved, and strikes his blow, down the sinner falls; backward he drops. There is hell behind him, and as he falls backward, he looks upward, and shrieks, "Lost! lost! LOST! *Time* LOST! *sabbaths* LOST! *means* LOST! *soul* LOST! *heaven* LOST!" Backwards he drops; all his sins seem to hang round his neck like so many millstones, as he plunges into the burning abyss. "Come and see." Lord, save him! O my God, save him! "Come and see."

Blessed be God, the rider has not overtaken him yet. Blessed be God, there is time and space yet, for that poor sinner; he may be saved yet; he has not dropped into hell. "Come and see." The horse and the rider have not overtaken you yet; and, therefore, there is an "accepted time," and there is "a day of salvation." "Come and see." There is God the Father inviting you; God the Father commanding you; God the Father swearing he has no pleasure in your death, and that he has pleasure in your life. "Come and see." There is Jesus come to seek you. He has travelled thirty years to save you; he is dying on the cross; with his outstretched arms he says, "Come unto me, and I will give you rest." "He that believeth on me shall never die." Jesus is looking; and he says, "Ye will not come unto

me, that ye may have life." "Come and see." There is a Saviour waiting to receive you. O, my brothers and sisters, "Come and see." Here is the Spirit striving; here is the door open; here is salvation within your reach: it is the "accepted time," it is the "day of mercy." "Come and see." The poor sinner is stopping—he is thinking—he is sighing—he is saying, "Hallelujah to God!" and the angels carry the news to glory. "Come and see." One soul is saved; salvation is come into this house; he is entering in at the strait gate, and the narrow way. I trust such will be the case with many souls to-night. May the Lord grant it; and devils see it and gnash their teeth; angels see, and welcome the traveller; and God shows he has no pleasure in death. "Come and see." There is the believer; he is going on the highway to glory, from promise to promise; he plucks the promise from the tree of salvation, as he goes along. "Come and see." There is the believer running the race that is set before him; he is walking, and is not weary, for every step brings him nearer to glory Hallelujah to God!

And, my friends, is the believer at all alarmed, as the horse and his rider approaches? No. Does he say, "O mine enemy!" When grim death has lost his sting, he wears an angel's face; and he has lost his sting to a believer. I will tell you how a believer feels, when he sees the pale horse with the rider. He is something like a young gentleman at school. The time of vacation comes, and his father says, "I will send for thee, and thou shalt come home." The young man has got everything packed up, and expects his father's servant to come; he looks out at the window, and he says, "Is my father's servant coming? O yes, yonder I see my father's pale horse; I know it well enough; my father's

servant is coming." And when the servant comes on the pale horse, does he feel sick? No, he goes round to his poor school-fellows, and shakes hands, and says, "Farewell; I shall be glad to see you at my father's house; I shall be glad to welcome you home; I shall see my father, my mother, and my companions;" and there is his father's servant on his father's pale horse. So it is, my brethren, with an heir of God, and a joint-heir with Christ. When death comes upon his pale horse, he does not feel faint; his father's servant is coming; he shakes hands with all who are around him, and says, "Farewell; meet me in heaven; I will meet you at the pearly gates; and I will welcome you. I shall see my father, my mother, my brother, my relations, and my friends; Farewell!" "O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?—Thanks be unto God who giveth us the victory, through our Lord Jesus Christ." "Come and see," then, the believer die; come and see his triumph over the last enemy; come and see him, and the rider of the horse. There he goes, from all the sorrows of time to the joys of eternity; he enters into the rest of the people of God, and there awaits the consummation of God's people.

I well remember the time when the pale horse and his rider approached SAMMY HICK, "the village blacksmith." He was nearer to him than I thought him to be. I was with him on the Wednesday, and he died upon the Monday. The pale horse overtook him on the Monday; there was a young man said on Sunday night, (he did not sleep with him, but watched with him,) that such a night he did not expect to see again. They were singing and praising God; and he said the place seemed filled with the glory of God. The pale horse and his rider approached, and poor *Sammy's* speech began to falter,

and his breath to fail ; but, glory be to God, he was not afraid of seeing the pale horse at all ; no, it was joy, peace, and love. Two or three neighbours came in, and thought they would sing him over the river ; they saw him wading across Jordan to the promised land ; and when all the power of language failed,

“Joy beaming through his eyes did break,
And meant the thanks he could not speak.”

They saw his eyes sparkle ; they saw the joy of his soul as he went along, and the thanks he could not speak. And just before he took his last step out of time into glory, the poor soldier waved his hand, crying, “Victory, victory, victory !” Glory be to God : if he saved him, he can save you ; and, therefore, let us learn that “now is the accepted time, and now is the day of salvation ;” now is the moment of mercy.

May the power and presence of God rest upon every sinner’s heart and mind ; and may the Lord grant that every one may enter into the narrow way !

May the Lord bless his word ! Amen.

SERMON II.

A WARNING AGAINST DECEPTION.

“Be not deceived; God is not mocked; for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap; for he that soweth to the flesh, shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit, shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting.” GAL. vi. 7, 8.

WHEN we look at the state of the world, with the light of revelation, and with a spiritual discernment, there are some very important and some very striking features that arrest our attention. To see an object, requires light—a man with the strongest eyes can see nothing in the dark midnight; and to see an object requires an eye—a blind man can see nothing at mid-day. The Lord has afforded us light—he has given us the sunshine of Revelation; and we may look also with the eye of spiritual discernment. And when we so look at the state of the world, there are some very important and very striking features that arrest our attention. We discover, my friends, that there is a great deceiver abroad, and that he deceives on purpose to destroy; his object is destruction, his means deception. And he has a great advantage in this work of deception and destruction, from the blindness of our minds, from the corruption of our hearts, from our connection with the world; and though he takes this advantage, and we discover it, this deceiver, this destroyer awfully succeeds, and thousands of our fellow-creatures are under his power. Awful sight! but it is the fact.

But still, when we have a spiritual discernment and the light of revelation, there is another thing that arrests our attention; that there is a counteracting influence.

There is a Holy Spirit counteracting the operations of this evil spirit. And the Holy Spirit, in the great work of undeceiving souls and keeping them so—in counteracting the work of the destroyer and murderer—has also peculiar advantages; he has the advantage of the Scriptures, the advantage of an illuminated conscience, the advantage of the great sanctions of the weight of eternal woe, into which sinners would fall at last without mercy, and the “far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory,” which the believer shall enjoy with Christ for ever and ever.

The great deceiver and destroyer carries on his work of deception and destruction by man; he knows that man can be his instrument in destroying man. So the Holy Ghost, in his counteracting influence, carries on this great work of salvation by man; so that, as the devil destroys man *by man*, God saves man *by man*. And therefore, the great work of the ministry—you may say the grand and sole work—is to counteract the great work of this deceiver and destroyer, to undeceive souls and keep them undeceived. The apostle, therefore, was God’s instrument in counteracting the designs of this deceiver and murderer. And he had preached in Galatia, and there (blessed be God!) many had the veil rent off the eyes of their hearts, and they had seen truth in God’s light, and they felt what they said. God had crowned his labours with success; and he had got thousands out of the hands of this deceiver and destroyer. And as the great work of the ministry is to undeceive souls, you may be sure the greatest pleasure of the minister’s heart is to see his work crowned with success. The Lord crowned his labours with success. But the great deceiver and destroyer got many of them back again under his power and influence; and, therefore, the apostle wrote this letter

“with his own hand,” and, I dare say, almost with tears of blood. “O foolish Galatians,” he wrote, “who hath bewitched you, that you should not obey the truth?” He wrote the letter with his own hand; and if they did in that day, as we do now, when there is an emphatic passage—under-score it in order to arrest the attention of the reader—I think he would under-score my text: “Be not deceived; God is not mocked; for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap;” and so forth.

Then, my friends, the apostle here guards us against being deceived upon four subjects of the highest practical importance. One is, “Be not deceived” in the being, the perfections, and the character of God; “God is not mocked.” Secondly, “be not deceived” in your own character as rational creatures, and as redeemed sinners, on probation for eternity; “for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap;” life is our seed-time, and eternity will be our reaping time. Thirdly, “be not deceived” in the evil nature and dreadful end of a life of sin—“for he that soweth to his flesh, shall of the flesh reap corruption.” Lastly, “be not deceived” in the nature, the necessity, and excellency of a life of holiness—“he that soweth to the Spirit, shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting.” On these four grand subjects, Lord grant we may be undeceived and kept so. Help thy poor “dust and ashes,” then, to secure the end at which we are aiming, and grant that the power of the Spirit may be in the word. If you came in here under the hands of the deceiver and murderer, the Lord grant you may get completely out of them.

I. First, then, my friends, the apostle guards us against being deceived in THE BEING, THE PERFECTIONS, AND THE CHARACTER OF GOD.

You know, I cannot pretend to dwell upon the

attributes of the divine character; but there are two that seem to arrest our attention here. "Be not deceived; God is not mocked." You cannot deceive him; this fills the mind with a clear view of God's *omnipresence* and *omniscience*. God cannot be deceived, because he is everywhere present, and because he is everywhere present to read thoughts, words, and actions. Therefore, "be not deceived;" we are always in the presence and always in the eye of God; "God is not mocked;" God cannot be deceived.

There are few attributes of God which stand more prominently forward in the Scriptures of eternal truth, than God's *omnipresence* and *omniscience*. The psalmist, you know, had such a living view of it that he composed the 139th psalm, which should be written in our hearts; "If I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea, even there shall thy hand lead me, and thy right-hand shall uphold me; if I ascend up into heaven," into the brilliancy of unclouded glory, "thou art there; if I make my bed in hell," in frowning darkness, "behold thou art there."

"Awake, asleep, at home, abroad,
I am surrounded still with God."

Indeed, these attributes are essential to the character of God, as the moral Governor and final Judge of the world. If God were not always present, and present to read thoughts, words, and actions, he could not properly either punish the wicked or reward the righteous in the day of judgment. But he *shall* "judge the secrets of all hearts, according to the Gospel," through the medium of our Lord Jesus Christ.

My dear friends, "be not deceived" here. I "speak the words of truth and soberness;" there never was the

man born yet—I would speak it with solemnity, God never made the man yet, that had too deep a sense of this truth, “Thou God seest me.” The sinner may live in open sin, and think no one takes notice of him; but he is mistaken—“God is not mocked.” Swearer! you may “take the name of the Lord your God in vain,” and may think little about the oaths you swear, and suppose nobody notices them; but there is One that notices them—and that is God, and he is somebody; and you will find they will be recorded against you by the finger of God. The filthy talker may poison the air around him, like an open sepulchre, and carry contagion and death wherever he goes, and think no one observes him; but he is mistaken—“for every idle word that he speaks, he shall give account in the day of judgment.” The unjust dealer may take advantage of his neighbour’s necessity or ignorance to rob him secretly, and say, ‘Nobody knows anything about it!’ Does not there? But you are mistaken—God does, and he is somebody; and you will find it so, without repentance and restitution. That young man—I do not know whether he is here or not—that young man that has formed connections, and his expenses as an apprentice are rather greater than the pocket money his parents can afford him, that must go upon a party of pleasure on a Sunday, and appear like other young men, and not seem to be limited in his means—that young man takes money out of his employer’s till, and he says, ‘Nobody knows anything about it;’ I tell you, young man, there is somebody that knows something about it, and you will find it so; and if there be such a young man in this congregation, I say, young man, restore it directly, carry it to your master’s till, or you are a ruined man for ever; if you have an opportunity of restitution, and do not restore it, the blood of

Christ cannot wash away your sin, unless you do. That young woman may take what is in her master's drawers, or what lies carelessly about, and say, 'Nobody knows it;' you are mistaken, young woman—God knows it, and God is somebody. If a man lives in sin, he is always under the heart-inspecting, sin-hating eye of an ever-present God. The eye of the Lord does not merely observe actions and words, but it is particularly upon *the heart*; he assumes to himself this character—"I search the heart, I try the reins." Principles and motives of actions are always under the direct inspection of an omnipresent and omniscient God; "to him all hearts are open," and "from him no secrets are hid." Whatever actions have been committed in the life—they had first their origin in the heart; whatever sin has broken out of the mouth, it had first its origin in the heart; all sins committed by word and action had first their origin in the heart. And then, my dear friends, there are thousands and thousands of deep, and black, and aggravated sins, that have been committed in the heart in the eye of God, that never come into word nor action. "Be not deceived;"—Spirit of the living God! breathe in the language—"Be not deceived; God is not mocked;" you cannot deceive him.

The reason, therefore, why many love sin, and live in sin, is because they have not a sufficient and lively impression of this truth, (as I said,) "Thou God seest me." There is a very striking account of it in the 8th chapter of the prophecy of Ezekiel. "Then said he unto me, Son of man, lift up thine eyes now the way toward the north. So I lifted up mine eyes the way toward the north, and, behold, northward at the gate of the altar this image of jealousy in the entry. He said furthermore unto me, Son of man, Seest thou what they do? even the great

abominations that the house of Israel committeth here, that I should go far off from my sanctuary? but turn thee yet again, and thou shalt see greater abominations. And he brought me to the door of the court; and when I looked, behold a hole in the wall. Then said he unto me, Son of man, dig now in the wall: and when I had digged in the wall, behold a door. And he said unto me, Go in, and behold the wicked abominations that they do here. So I went in and saw; and behold every form of creeping things, and abominable beasts, and all the idols of the house of Israel, pourtrayed upon the wall round about. And there stood before them seventy men of the ancients of the house of Israel, and in the midst of them stood Jaazaniah the son of Shaphan, with every man his censer in his hand; and a thick cloud of incense went up. Then said he unto me, Son of man, hast thou seen what the ancients of the house of Israel do in the dark, every man in the chambers of his imagery? for they say, The Lord seeth us not; the Lord hath forsaken the earth." Hast thou seen that? God saw it all; but they thought he did not; they thought he could be "deceived," they thought he could be "mocked," for they said, "The Lord seeth us not, the Lord hath forsaken the earth." The deceiver thus blinded their eyes, and the destroyer thus hardened their hearts, and got them to believe, while they were committing these abominations—"The Lord seeth us not, the Lord hath forsaken the earth." But they were "deceived;" God was "not mocked."

Remember, my dear friends, ("be not deceived,") that we are always in the presence, not merely of the omniscient and omnipotent Jehovah; but look at his relative character; we are always in the presence of our Monarch; we cannot commit one sin, but it is committed under the eye of our Monarch, who made the law, and that

Monarch will vindicate it. Remember, we are always in the presence of our divine Benefactor, who "crowns us with loving-kindness and tender mercy;" and whatever that mercy may be, whether temporal or spiritual, we cannot abuse the favour, but we abuse it before his eye, who bought us with his blood, and gives it of his love. To give a beggar a favour, and a valuable favour too, that costs you much, and to see the beggar abuse it in your own eye—how it grieves you that you should give it him! So, my friends, there is not one of the ten thousand mercies, whether of creation or redemption, providence or grace, which God gives us, but, if that mercy be abused, it is abused in the eye of our Benefactor. And remember, too, we are always in the presence, not merely of our Sovereign and Benefactor, but of our Judge; "for all these things"—whether we think God is to be "mocked" or not—"he will bring us into judgment." Therefore, I lift up my voice, (Spirit of the living God, put the life into it!) and say, "Be not deceived" in the being of God, in his omnipresence and omniscience, nor in this, that you are always in the presence and under the eye of your Sovereign, your Saviour, and your Judge.

II. There is a second thing, which we affectionately and earnestly guard you against being deceived in; and that is—YOURSELVES.

Friends, "be not deceived" in your own character—a character tremendously awful. Remember you are rational creatures; remember you are redeemed sinners on probation for eternity. Remember, my dear friends, (as far as a figure can represent it,) this life is our seed-time, and eternity will be our reaping-time. What a man sows in time, he shall reap in eternity. What a man sows in kind in time, he shall reap, in some measure, in

kind in eternity; what a man sows in degree in time, he shall reap in degree in eternity.

My friends, this idea stamps an importance on every thought, and word, and action of every probationer for eternity, that is overwhelming. I feel my heart burdened—and I cannot disburden it—because every thought, word, and action of these probationers for eternity runs into eternity; it is seed sown on a fertile soil, and will grow up, in multiplied joys, *for ever—for ever—for ever*. Little as we think about thoughts, and words, and actions, they are awful, peculiarly awful, when in connection with eternity. They all run into eternity; sinful thoughts, words, and actions lay hold of eternity, and run into eternity—and holy thoughts, words, and actions, done under the influence of the Spirit of God, and sprinkled with the blood of Christ, run into eternity. Look each other, therefore, in the face, and there see written in capital letters on every forehead—“A rational creature, a redeemed sinner, on probation for eternity.”

My dear friends, you know we are redeemed sinners, as well as rational creatures. We are sinners, guilty in the presence of God; but, blessed be God! we are redeemed sinners, and consequently, as guilty sinners who are redeemed, we can obtain pardon. But if we are not pardoned in time, we never can be pardoned. Consequently, consider not only our awfully important character as rational creatures, but how it increases the importance of our situation, that we are guilty sinners, redeemed by the blood of Christ, and that we must be pardoned in time or we never can be pardoned; if not pardoned in time, we are lost for ever. And then, too, we are *fallen* sinners, corrupt from head to foot, and defiled by sin. As fallen sinners, we “must be born again:” as fallen sinners, we must be regenerated, we must be

“renewed in the spirit of our minds;” we must be so; and this can only be done in time, and if it be not done in time, it never can be done. I appeal to you now—if you can bear the thought, look fairly at yourself; ‘I am here a rational creature, my thoughts, words, and actions run into eternity; I am here a guilty sinner, but I am redeemed, and here is pardon to be obtained, but it must be obtained in time if it be ever obtained, and if not obtained in time, I am ruined for ever; I am a fallen sinner, and therefore I must obtain salvation, I must obtain a new creation, I must obtain sanctification of the spirit by faith, and that must be in time or it never can be, and if I die in my sins, I am lost for ever.’

Now I say, “be not deceived” in yourselves. If this view of the subject does not stamp an infinite importance, an infinite dignity upon your character, I do not know in what way you can view yourselves. It is an awful character we have to sustain and to fill up, to improve or be lost; you are rational creatures and redeemed sinners on probation for eternity; and this life is our seed-time, and eternity will be our reaping-time, and what we sow in time we shall reap in eternity.

And then, as probationers for eternity, pray what is this *time*? It is not yesterday—that is gone; it is not to-morrow—that is not ours, it is not here. It is *now*. All these lines of infinite importance, of a rational creature and a redeemed sinner on trial for eternity—all these lines meet in the focus of the present *now*. Past time is gone—it cannot be recovered; time to come is not ours—not in our possession. And therefore, my friends, see your character in this light, and all these important considerations, in which eternity is at stake, centre in a moment. It was not a poetic flight of Dr.

Young, he "speaks the words of truth and soberness," when he says:—

"The man's unborn, that duly weighed an hour."

"Be not deceived;" let not the destroyer of your never-dying souls deceive you here. Awake to your character and to your case, to your guilt and to your danger, and to your interest; and begin to think, and feel, and choose, and act, and seek, as rational creatures and as redeemed sinners on probation for eternity. You are guilty; and therefore, I pray you, my brethren, improve the present moment to obtain pardon. You are fallen; improve the present moment, (for it is only the present moment we can call our own,)—improve the present moment to obtain that change of heart, which the Spirit of God is waiting and willing to effect upon your precious and immortal souls.

III. Again, thirdly, "be not deceived" in THE EVIL NATURE AND DREADFUL END OF A LIFE OF SIN.

Brethren, I beg an interest in your prayers; eternity is at stake; let God rend the veil off these eyes and off these hearts. Look, in the light of God, at the evil nature and dreadful end of a life of sin.

The nature of a life of sin is called here by the figurative expression "sowing to the flesh;" "he that soweth to the flesh, shall of the flesh reap corruption." Stripping it of its figure, "sowing to the flesh" means living according to the principles, and propensities, and appetites, and passions of our fallen nature; that man that lives only according to these, is sowing to the flesh. You cannot doubt that that drunkard, who sinks himself far below the brute, is "sowing to the flesh,"—just gratifying his own unclean appetites and passions. You cannot doubt that that swearer is "sowing to the flesh,"

and that open sabbath-breaker. You cannot doubt that that filthy creature that is all pollution, whose mouth is "like an open sepulchre," is "sowing to the flesh." And that person who is living in open sin—you are sure he is "sowing to the flesh;" you cannot dispute it. But then here are others "sowing to the flesh," who are not swearers, nor sabbath-breakers, nor liars, nor drunkards; I suppose I may have some scores of such here. That young person, that can have greater pleasure at the card-table than the table of the Lord—you are "sowing to the flesh." You, that have greater pleasure in the theatre than in the house of God—you are "sowing to the flesh." You, that have greater pleasure in reading a novel or a newspaper, than in reading the oracles of God—you are "sowing to the flesh." My young friends, you that are "lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God"—you are under the hand of the deceiver, you are in the fangs of the murderer; the Lord undeceive you! I feel, before I speak it, there are many amiable fathers and mothers, and I do not doubt there are some here—and yet they are "sowing to the flesh;" they are good neighbours, who would not do anybody any harm, and are very glad to do anybody a good turn; they are kind to their children, bringing them up to some trade, and endeavouring to get them some business by which they may pass through the world comfortably and respectably; who but praises them for that? kind-hearted father and mother! that pay that attention to the temporal interests of your child; but then, my friends, you are "sowing to the flesh." Remember you have a soul to save, and remember your child has a soul to save. Remember, with all the care about that beloved child, it is about its poor body; where is the care about its never-dying soul? Your child is guilty; it must be pardoned; where is the

care to get it pardoned? Your child is fallen; it must be "born again," or it is lost for ever; where is the concern about this? My dear friends, how many of you fathers and mothers are "sowing to the flesh!" May be, never since you had a house have you had family prayer. You are joined together in the closest and most affectionate bond, and there the branches of your body are springing up, (and beautiful branches too!) and yet you have never had family prayer said or read, since you were married; children never called to prayer, servants never called to prayer! My dear friends, with all your amiable qualities, we are obliged to say, you are "sowing to the flesh."

But, my dear friends, if you live according to the principles, and propensities, and appetites, and passions of your fallen nature, and so you let your thoughts rise here, and end here, and centre here—remember, harvest will come. Sabbath-breaker! remember, harvest will come. My young friends, you may despise the counsel of God against yourselves, and be "lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God;" but, remember, harvest will come. It is coming. Harvest! and pray, what sort of a harvest will a man reap, who has been all his lifetime "sowing to the flesh?" He shall reap; but the apostle says it shall be—"corruption." What a harvest is that to reap! a man continually reaping "corruption," to begin in the morning to reap "corruption," and then again to be renewed at night to reap "corruption," and then again to reap "corruption," and then again to reap "corruption," a perpetual and eternal reaping of "corruption!" What a harvest is this! Would you like to reap it, friends? Do you wish to see a man who is reaping it now? He was a man, that "sowed to the flesh," and there he is now reaping the harvest; do you

wish to hear him? Why, then, make room; hear him; "Father, Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus, that he may dip the tip of his finger in water, and cool my tongue, for I am tormented in this flame." Will you like to go shares with him, friends? Your harvest will be worse than his; he had not a Gospel such as you have had, nor means such as you have had, nor calls such as you have had; will you wish to go to hell, to reap there in a brighter flame, and in more ardent pangs, and sufferings, and sorrows, than he has? Lord, save the sinner!

"Be not deceived," then; see the nature and end of a life of sin—and sin on, if you can—and sin on if you dare. If you saw a man with a seed-basket on his shoulder, who had a field which by proper cultivation would bring a plentiful crop and a profit too, and there he was with his basket filled with thistles and nettles, and all noxious weeds that he could lay his hand on, and he was sowing that field with these from morning to night, and on Sunday too—you would say, 'I doubt yon man is spoiling that field, sowing it with that stuff;' and if you saw him going on sowing still all day long, and on Sunday sowing more than any day, you would say, 'I think it is time yon man was stopped, he must be a madman;' and suppose you talked to a person that saw it too, and he said to you, 'Do you know what the end will be?' 'Why,' you would say, 'he is ruining his field; it must be all undone before any crop can be got from it again.' 'Ah! but (says the other) do you know these seeds that he is sowing will rise and grow to be a plentiful harvest, and they will touch the clouds, and then afterwards the field is to be cleared of them, and there is to be a pile made of them in the middle of it, and the man is to be put in the middle of the pile, and a fire

is to be set to the pile of his own sowing, and there he is to be burnt to death?' 'Do you say so?' 'That is the truth!' 'Why, then, surely he must be undeceived; let us try to undeceive; do let us try to undeceive him; never was such a madman in the world!' Ah, friends, but I am afraid I have many such madmen and madwomen before me! You are "sowing to the flesh;" it will grow up a plentiful harvest, and then at last there will be a pile made of it, and your poor soul will be put in the middle of the pile, and the lightning of God's eye will kindle it, and there you will burn in the middle of a pile of your own sowing, and "the smoke of your torment shall ascend up for ever and ever," and you will have no rest day nor night. "Be not deceived; he that soweth to his flesh, shall of the flesh reap corruption"—reap destruction. Awake, then, to see the evil nature and the dreadful end of a life of sin. May the awakening power of God shake every sinner's heart!

IV. "Be not deceived" in THE NATURE AND NECESSITY AND EXCELLENCY OF A LIFE OF HOLINESS.

A life of holiness is called by the figurative expression "sowing to the Spirit"—that is, yielding to the dictates of the Holy Spirit in this great work of salvation, in counteracting the deadly designs of the deceiver and the destroyer. Consequently, as the ministry is the medium of the Spirit, it is yielding to the teaching of God through the medium of the ministry. When a man begins to "sow to the Spirit," he then begins to listen and yield to the teaching of the Holy Spirit upon his soul by the ministry of the Word of God.

And, when a man begins to "sow to the Spirit," you will always find him a serious man. He says, 'Oh! what a madman I have been! I have been "sowing to the flesh" all my life; I have been yielding to my cor-

ruptions; I am a guilty sinner, I must be pardoned; I am a fallen sinner, I must be renewed—or I die.' These are serious matters. If you never began to "sow to the Spirit," that is, seriously to consider your state, the Lord grant you may begin to-night.

When a man begins to "sow to the Spirit," he not only seriously thinks, but he begins to pray. He has a view of his guilt, and of the malice of his enemies; he cannot help himself, cannot pardon himself, cannot change his own heart. But, blessed be God! there is One that can help him; and the sight of One that can help him, will bring him on his knees. If you have never been upon your knees, if you have never cried "God be merciful to me a sinner," you have never sowed one handful of seed to this hour. The Lord grant you may begin to-night! Devils then will look on, and growl with envy and malice, 'We shall lose him; he is praying, he is praying; stop him—stop him, if you can,' says the devil, 'hold your peace, hold your peace;' but when the devil says, 'hold your peace,' and the world says 'hold your peace,' and relations say 'hold your peace,' may you "cry so much the more, Thou son of David, have mercy on us!" 'He is praying,' say angels; 'we shall get him.' 'He is praying,' says God; 'go, Ananias, and tell him to wash away his sins, and call on the name of the Lord.' So, when a man "sows to the Spirit," you will always see him on his knees; "and Satan trembles," Mr. Cowper says—

"Satan trembles, when he sees
The weakest saint upon his knees."

Aye, and we may change the term; I do not say it is quite so musical, but it is true;

"Satan trembles, when he sees
The greatest sinner on his knees."

But when he begins to "sow to the Spirit," it is sure to lead to Christ. "Sow to the Spirit," and the plough-share of conviction shall break up the fallow ground of your heart; "sow to the Spirit," and the seeds of divine light and life will be there, and the Holy Ghost will lead you to Christ. He will reveal Jesus; He will assist you to believe on Him. And He will reveal your interest in his blood; and you shall be enabled, under the influence of the Spirit, to cry out this delightful truth, "My Lord! my God!" Sow away, friends. Think, if you have never begun to think; pray, if you have never begun to pray; fly to "the blood of the covenant," to the Saviour of sinners, who is able and willing to save to the uttermost.

And when you have done this, yield to the teaching of the Spirit of God, and thus may all the graces of the Spirit, "against which there is no law," adorn your souls with all those blessed fruits of righteousness, which will stand the test of the judgment; and when "wood, hay, stubble," are burnt up, there will be the "gold, silver, and precious stones," that will sparkle so much the brighter.

"Ye shall reap if ye faint not," as the apostle says. Do not "be weary in well doing;" (the "sowing to the Spirit" is doing well; there is nothing like it;) "ye shall reap, if ye faint not." And "in due season"—just when the harvest is ripe; just when it is the proper time you shall reap. And what will be the harvest? "Life everlasting." I do not know what it will be, I cannot tell you. If I could tell you what it will be, when angels come to reap the harvest of the world in the day of God, and angels shout, "Harvest home!" then I could tell you something of the wisdom of "sowing to the Spirit." If I could tell you the beauty of the new-made

body—if I could tell you the happiness of the soul when it takes possession of the body—if I could tell you the glory of Christ when he comes “to be glorified in his saints,” then I could tell you something of the wisdom of “sowing to the Spirit.” If I could tell you a thousandth part of the joy with which I hope to meet you there, when we shall get into the car of salvation, and fly up to glory while angels are singing as we go, and they say, “The troubles are past, it is all over, it is harvest home”—if I could tell you a thousandth part of the joy which we shall feel when our weeping days are past and it is harvest before us—if I could tell you a thousandth part of the joy which we shall feel when we shout “Harvest home!” and when we sit at the harvest table, and there is the Lord of the harvest at the head of the table, and there we are expanding with “joy unspeakable and full of glory”—then I could tell you something of the wisdom of “sowing to the Spirit.” It will be such a life, and such a “life everlasting.” Come, my fellow-creatures, let us sow (fill both hands) night and day. Every waking hour may we, some way or another, be “sowing to the Spirit.”

If you were to go into a field and see a man sowing very plentifully and very pleasantly, you would ask him, what is the reason of this? ‘Why,’ says he, ‘I will tell you; I know, that for every grain of corn I sow I shall reap a guinea.’ ‘Why, then, if you know that, I do not wonder at your sowing plentifully and pleasantly.’ Suppose that were possible, brethren, that is nothing to “sowing to the Spirit.” “Sowing to the Spirit,” and “reaping life everlasting,” is infinitely better than sowing grains of corn and reaping guineas of gold.

Oh! then, may this hand be the means of tearing off the veil; and the Lord grant that out of the hands of the

deceiver and destroyer every soul may be brought this night! I know he will not give you up; I know he will try to keep you; but he cannot murder you without your consent. If he can get your consent to be murdered and damned, he will do for you. But then he will not speak truth, you know. He will say, 'Why, if you begin to "sow to the Spirit," you will find it hard work: it is no easy work walking on clods and having a basket on your back; you will have to labour for it, you will have to run for it, you will have to wrestle for it, you will have to fight for it; you will find it laborious work, young man.' Very well, destroyer; but "everlasting life" will pay for it all; the harvest will pay for it all. And dare that deceiver and destroyer say, that a man that "sows to the flesh" has not labour? has he not more toil than a man that "sows to the Spirit?" why, he keeps him labouring there every day in the week, and sometimes all day on Sunday; and some of you, that are "sowing to the flesh," know that he is as great a tyrant as it is possible for a devil to be. You will excuse me, my friends, but I knew an old collier converted after seventy years, and he used to talk in this way, and to say, "My old master wants me back again; but I drive him away, and I say, 'Nay, nay, no more of thy service, I served thee seventy years, and I never knew anything but trouble and expense through thee.'" I think that is a poor master; and yet this deceiver will come and tell you that if you "sow to the Spirit" it will be a laborious time. Yes, it may be a laborious time; but "everlasting life" will pay for all; and you that are "sowing to the flesh," it is all labour, and labour lost for ever!

'Yes,' he will say, 'but if you begin to "sow to the Spirit" you will find it very expensive; you will be

forced to sell all, forced to give up all; a very expensive seed-time you will find it.' Well, deceiver! well, destroyer! be it so; "everlasting life" will make amends for it. When a man sells all, he gets the favour of God; and that is better than all he sells. My friends, hear the Lord of the harvest; he says, "If any man leave father, and mother, and brethren, and houses, and land," (and I think when a man has left these he has not much left; and what sort of a loser is he?) "he shall receive a hundred fold in this present time, and in the world to come life everlasting." Then, talk about the expense of it! when you shall get "a hundred fold in this present time, and in the world to come life everlasting." I am sure, you fathers and mothers, if you knew a trade where your poor children, if they paid proper attention, could get a hundred per cent. to an absolute certainty, you would choose that trade for them. And, supposing you could find such a trade, that would be a paltry profit compared with "sowing to the Spirit;" for this is not a hundred *per cent.*; no, blessed be God! it is "a hundred *fold*"—for every shilling five pounds, and for every pound a hundred—and then "everlasting life" at the end of all! "Be not deceived." As for the expense of it, I am sure the destroyer is a more expensive master a good deal; why, his service is so expensive, that some of his servants can hardly get clothes to put on them, and they are obliged almost to starve their wives and children. So do not talk of the expense of "sowing to the Spirit;" "sowing to the flesh" is much more expensive, and hell at the end of it!

'Well, but,' he will say, 'you are young people, perhaps only sixteen years old; if you begin to "sow to the Spirit" now, you may have to sow for fifty or sixty years; and that will be a very long seed-time.' Well, "ever-

lasting life" will pay for all. And then, look, the destroyer and the murderer will not let his sowers have such a long seed-time; he shortens their days, and some of them die in the midst of their years; so that some of those who "sow to the flesh" do not live half their days; you will sooner get to hell than a believer will get to heaven. But it will be a long seed-time, he says; well, the longer the better; he that soweth plentifully, shall also reap plentifully." The longer the "sowing to the Spirit," the greater the harvest of glory. If you will allow me to follow out the idea—look into heaven, and see the man that "sowed to the Spirit" four or five years before he died; and what a little nook of glory he has got! And look again at the man that was "sowing to the Spirit" forty or fifty years, and see his field of glory; it is so large that you cannot see over it. Oh! then, "be not deceived; God is not mocked; for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap; for he that soweth to his flesh, shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit, shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting."

Now, my dear friends, have you settled about it in your minds? Have you determined—"I will "sow to the flesh;" I have been in the hands of the deceiver and murderer, I see he is both, but I will lie calmly under the deceiver still, and I will put myself in the hands of the murderer again; I will not be undeceived, I love my deception?" Have you settled on that? Is it the settled principle of your heart, "I have been in the hands of the deceiver and the murderer, and I will lie down another night very calmly in his hands; I may be dead before morning, and I may be reaping my harvest in everlasting destruction; but, whether I am or not, I will "do despite unto the Spirit," I will shut my eyes to the

light, I will harden my heart against conviction, I will refuse life, and I will choose death?' Am I then, my friends, thus rejected? Is this to be the end of all the labours of this poor worm that now stands before you to attempt to undeceive you and to save your never-dying souls? Surely not, surely not! May the Spirit of power—the Spirit of conviction rest upon your mind; and may your answer be—'I yield, I yield! I neither can nor will hold out any more: no, no; my Saviour loves me more than the devil hates me, the Holy Ghost loves me more than the fiend hates me; He is more desirous of my salvation than the devil is of my destruction; I will put myself into the hands of the Saviour, and there I will live, and there I will die.' So be it—so be it—may the omniscient God be writing at this moment! may the host of heaven say—'It is.' Lord, grant it, for Christ's sake

SERMON III.

THE INFINITE AND EVERLASTING LOVE OF GOD TO MAN.

“For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.”—JOHN iii. 16.

THE subject which the text brings before you, is the infinite and the everlasting love of God to man. In viewing this subject, we would stand upon the mount of revelation; for it is only there that we can see it; and as we ascend the ladder of revelation you will catch some of the prominent points. As we fix the mind on the prominent objects, let us look, and wonder, and adore! We shall there see the corresponding sentiments and feelings that ought to be excited in our hearts, when we view this most interesting subject; and the folly and danger of those persons who neglect, and despise, and live without the salvation of this love of God.

I consider myself, then, with you, upon the mount of revelation; and, from the lowest rounds of that mount, what is the first thing that arrests our attention there, in the meditation of this interesting and important subject?

I. The first thing is, THE DEGRADED STATE OF THE OBJECT. “God so loved the *world*.”

Excellency must generally be considered essential in the object which is either really, or supposed to be, loved; but “God so loved the world.” What was there in the world to draw forth the infinite and everlasting love of God? The world was guilty before God; and, therefore, in justice, God must punish it. The world was fallen

before God; and, therefore, justly forfeited his favour. The world was corrupt; and, therefore, the holiness of God must abhor it. And yet God has loved this world—this fallen, guilty, lost and ruined world. It is, consequently, surprising, and in some measure unaccountable, that the love of God should be thus fixed on a guilty, fallen, and therefore ruined world. Mr. Wesley, in one of his old hymns, says,

“He has loved it because He would.”

But, however, there is this corner-stone, and this foundation for all our hopes. We cannot give an account why God should love a world in this condition; it is a mystery we cannot explain; at the same time there is mercy in it, and this is the ground of all our comfort.

“For God so loved the world:” then God so loved me. It is always the having a property in an object which gives emphasis to its excellence. You may go through a palace, and admire the various things there which are admirable; but then there is no peculiar comfort in it. They are certainly beautiful, and raise our astonishment; but then, that is all—we have no interest in them. In order to have a peculiar comfort in an object, I must have a peculiar and personal interest in it. In this text, however, you may take all the comfort your poor souls and bodies wish; you may plunge into the ocean, and fill the vessel with this delightful subject. “God so loved the world”—then he loved me—I am personally the object of the infinite and everlasting love of God. Some poor timorous creatures, who always look to the dark side of the subject, may be ready to say, “Is it likely that God would love such a poor man as I am, and such an unworthy woman as I am?” My brethren, are you in the world—are you part of God’s

creation called the world? Yes. Then, my friends, God must love you, for you are part of the world. If you are no part of Adam's race, it is not likely that you can be saved; but if you constitute a part of the ransomed beings called the world, God loves you! There is no human being here—and if I had the world, and could make them all hear, I would tell them that there was not one of the number but could lay his hand upon his heart, and say, "God loved me." None are excluded but such as exclude themselves.

II. I will go a step farther. What is the next object that arrests our attention on the topic on which we have entered? It is **THE DESIGN** of the everlasting love of God to man.

You know what are the natural designs of love; and, as far as we have a knowledge of them, love never desires to weave a yoke about the neck of the beloved. Love never designs to increase the evils and the torment of the object of its affection—no such thing; on the contrary, if the object beloved be labouring under any evil, love participates in some measure by sympathy, and can never rest till the evil be removed. If the object of affection be exposed to any danger, love endeavours to extricate it. If the object of affection be destitute of any benefit which love can bestow, it is the heaven of love to give it. Consider, then, what must be the designs of the infinite love of God to man. Man is labouring under the evil of guilt, the evil of a broken law, and the evil of a corrupted and polluted nature; but, blessed be God, it is his design to remove it—it is the design of love, that guilt should be cancelled—it is the design of love, that corruption should be subdued. Man is in the hand of the enemy; but the design of love is to deliver him from the enemy. Man, as a sinner, is guilty—exposed and

liable to the vengeance of God; but the design of God is to save him from it. Man has forfeited the Divine favour and image; but the design of the love of God is to recover him to it. The designs of the infinite love of God are worthy of that infinite love; and, consequently, the design is to remove all our evils, to save us from all our dangers, to deliver us from all our enemies, and to give us the possession of all the salvation which infinite love can bestow. The designs of infinite love in the salvation of the world are so great, that the ministers of religion are represented as being "co-workers with God." God grant us success! The designs of the love of God in the salvation of a ruined world are so great, that it is the grand work of the devil to counteract them as far as he can. The designs of the love of God in the salvation of the world are so important and valuable, that angels never see the accomplishment in the salvation of any individual, but they rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory. May angels have that joy to-day, and see the designs of this infinite love accomplished in the salvation of every one before me!

III. We mount a step higher still, and what is the next object that arrests our attention? It is THE EXPENSE of this love: "God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son."

We may love a person who may be in distress; it may be possible for us to relieve him, and yet we will not go to the expense of it. A friend, whom we sincerely love, has contracted a debt of £1000; he is put into prison, we possess £1000, or perhaps £2000, and, therefore, we could release him instantly. We say, however, "I do sincerely respect my friend; I do sincerely regret that he is in such circumstances; I can assure him that I do most sincerely sympathize with him; he is in prison for

£1000; it is true I could liberate him, but I do not like to go to the expense." A world was ruined; it was in the hands of an enemy; and no expense to save this ruined world was spared by God! "Herein God commended his love." There is the wonderful point of it! "Herein God commended his love, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." When you were enemies, He expired for your salvation. We do not know the value of the gift; and, therefore, we cannot tell the expense; all that we can say is, that He so loved us, as to think the expense nothing in order to save the world. "God so loved the world, that He gave his only begotten Son." We do not know the sacrifice made by Him "who, though he was rich, yet for our sakes became poor; that we, through his poverty, might be made rich." We know the depth of his humiliation, when He was made incarnate; we know the depth of his sufferings, in some measure, when He was tempted forty days and forty nights in the wilderness, on our account; we know something of it when we see Him in his human character, fulfilling all righteousness; we see a little of it when we see Him in the garden almost sweating to death under our sins, and the opposition of his enemies; we may see a little of it when we see that God gave his only begotten Son, not merely to be incarnate, but to descend from the highest honour to the lowest degradation; we see a little of it in his fulfilling the law for thirty-three years, amidst a life of sorrow and suffering, and when the only begotten Son agonizes, and bleeds, and dies on the cross. Look at this, and see the expense! When you see Jesus cradled in the manger, please to write my text upon it—"God so loved the world." When you see Jesus fulfilling all righteousness, at every step He takes there is the print of his holy feet, and you may write in

every print—"God so loved the world." When you see Jesus in the garden agonizing and sweating as it were great drops of blood, catch one of the purple drops as they roll from his body, and with your pen write in blood—"God so loved the world." When Pilate wrote the inscription over the cross, there was written in Hebrew, Greek, and Latin, "Jesus of Nazareth, King of the Jews." When I see Jesus on the cross, I would not write, if I could, in Latin, Greek, and Hebrew; but I would write in all the languages of the earth—"God so loved the world!" Then pursue Him to his throne, there see Him in his mediatorial glory; and when I see Him there, I think I see a rainbow around his head, and printed upon it, in letters of light—"God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son!"

In looking, then, at the expense of this love, we may see *the infinite evil of sin*. So infinite was the evil of sin, that, to speak with reverence, God could not save the world without a sacrificial offering, and there was but one sacrificial offering that could be made for it. God could not save the world from mere mercy, without compromising his honour, or subverting his government. We know that He cannot save man from mere mercy; that there must be the sacrifice of the only begotten Son of God; and "God so loved the world, as to give his only begotten Son," who "tasted death for every man." Is not this delightful, at the same time that it gives us such an awful view of the evil of sin? Such is the nature of the holiness and justice of God, that his love could not save the world without a sacrifice for sin; and yet, such is the love of God to that world, that the sacrifice is freely given. Look at this: "God so loved the world;" and see, at the same time, the evil of sin, and the infinite love of God.

IV. We must proceed another step higher; and the next thing that arrests our attention on this subject is, **THE TERMS OF THE SALVATION.** "God so loved the world, that He gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life."

Look at the simplicity of those terms: "Whosoever will"—"To him that worketh not, but believeth on Him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness." When we look at the infinite evil of sin, what can we do? We can do nothing at all! Human nature has sinned—then human nature comes and fulfils all righteousness. Sinful man was exposed to the justice of God—and human nature comes and satisfies the demands of the justice of God. "It pleased the Father to put Him to grief, when He made his soul an offering for sin." Human nature had forfeited eternal love—and human nature comes and restores us to eternal love. Human nature was exposed to death—and human nature comes and endures it. Sinful nature was shut out from the kingdom of heaven—and in Jesus we see our human nature going and opening the kingdom of heaven again. Salvation is all placed on believing or receiving the record which is given here. It is true that the first act of saving faith, so far as it goes, is to believe in God's testimony concerning Himself, and then the testimony of God concerning ourselves—that we are guilty—that we are liable to the storms of vengeance; and, consequently, when a man first begins to believe in a saving point of view, he believes God's testimony concerning Himself, and then he is bound to believe that he may be justly shut out of heaven, and so justly shut up in hell. Saving faith produces conviction and repentance, and awakens us to our everlasting interests. If you have never yet

believed in the testimony of God concerning Himself, God grant that you may do it now! This is one peculiar mark of justifying faith, and this is the reason that God honours the faith that justifies. The very nature of justifying faith is, that self-dependance and self-expectation are completely annihilated, and justifying faith fixes itself on the Lord Jesus Christ; consequently, it is always the peculiar principle of justifying faith, that it comes out of ourselves, and fixes the eye, as it were, and absorbs the whole soul into Christ. Justifying faith convinces the sinner of the folly of cherishing the expectation of being saved by himself, and so absorbs his whole soul in the will of God in Christ Jesus. Faith always honours Christ—honours the person, and mediation, and merit of Christ; honours the plan of salvation; and always puts the honour upon the head of Him that deserves it. Whosoever believeth, whosoever comes out of himself, whosoever comes to Christ, whosoever abandons every creed but this, that Jesus died for him—I have never seen such a soul coming to Christ, in the depths of contrition, that ever was rejected by Him.

Let me entreat you, then, to come out of yourselves. How many of you are there who do not enjoy justifying faith! The reason is, you have been looking to yourselves; your eyes have been concentrated in yourselves, your own guilt, your own weakness, your own lowliness. If you go on in that condition, you cannot expect to experience liberty. You will not experience the liberty of God, or enjoy his pardon; and, in God's common way of working, you cannot, till you come out of yourselves, and fix your eyes on Jesus. He has given us his only begotten Son as the only proper object of faith; and "He is able to save unto the uttermost all who come unto God by Him." God give you to do that now!

Will you look out of yourselves? Will you look on Jesus? Will you believe the truth, that Christ is made of God to you wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption? Will you go to God for pardon, or will you not? "God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him, should not perish, but have everlasting life." And do you think, that since He formed the design of love to save you—and it is the joy of heaven to see you saved—that he will deny you the pardon? Now, will you come out of yourselves? Will you venture your all upon the merits of Jesus Christ? The Lord help you to do it now! The chain will drop off—the pardon will be sealed—the Spirit will attest that divinely-assisted act of yours—it will attest that you are "born of God."

Observe *the necessity of believing*: "Whosoever believeth." When we look at God loving the world, and giving his only begotten Son for its salvation, we are almost ready to say that God loved the world better than his own Son. And, my friends, notwithstanding God so loved the world, and so loves the world, he will not save the world so loved, unless the world put honour on his Son. Well, as God loves the world, if man will not believe on his Son, the holiness and justice of God will condemn it. God will have his Son to be honoured, and the man that does not put honour upon God's Son puts dishonour upon God Himself. "God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth." If He could not save the world without the gift of his Son, He gave his Son for the world; and, while his infinite love has thus given the Son, yet He will not save the world, unless that world believe upon Jesus Christ. If, then, you wish to do an act which is of others most pleasing to God, we know no

one act so acceptable to God, as a poor sinner believing on Christ. "Whosoever believeth"—none else! Be he who he may, his colour what it may, his clime where it may, and his crimes what they may,—he shall be saved.

Here you see the necessity of belief; and then *its advantages*: "He shall not perish." Whosoever believeth shall not perish, whatever may be the aggravation of his transgressions. If he had the transgressions of Manasseh, and of Saul of Tarsus, and, added to them, the transgressions of all the sins of the world centred upon him—yet he shall not perish. "God so loved the world, that whosoever believeth shall not perish"—because of the magnitude of his sins against the Divine law—shall not perish because of the magnitude of his transgressions. Whosoever believeth this, and by divine assistance accepteth grace on God's terms, and renounces his sins—whosoever accepteth a graciously offered Saviour—however aggravated his sins, or however enormous—he shall not perish. Whosoever believeth, shall not perish in the hands of the enemy; whosoever believeth, shall not perish in the flames of hell; no, not one spark shall touch that soul! "Whosoever believeth shall not perish, but have everlasting life." They shall have a title to everlasting life, by faith in the blood of the Lamb; they shall be heirs of God, and joint heirs with Jesus Christ. Whosoever believeth, shall have a meetness for everlasting life. The love of God shall baptize your soul in its own principle, and you shall be made meet for the inheritance of the saints in light. He shall feel the kingdom of God within him, which is righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost. Whosoever believeth, shall have everlasting life, in the full sense of the word, to all eternity!

Now, then, this is a very short and cursory view of this interesting subject; and what are the emotions which

should be excited in our souls? One emotion should be *gratitude*; and the duty *praise*. May we feel this most interesting subject—the love of God to us, and salvation in the simple way of believing! Can we believe these wonders, and not praise? Can we look at these, and not be thankful? Surely, as Young says,

Praise! flow for ever, (if astonishment
Will give thee leave,) my praise for ever flow!

The language of our reformers is somewhat quaint, but very just: "It is very meet, right, and our bounden duty, that we should at all times, and in all places, give thanks unto Thee, O Lord! Holy Father! Almighty, Everlasting God! Therefore, with angels, and arch-angels, and with all the company of heaven, we laud and magnify thy glorious name—evermore praising Thee." As the creature was so loved by the infinite love of God, that He did not spare his own Son for us, but freely gave Him up for us all; and, as the salvation of that love is so great, that the love of God could give us his only Son, ought we not to be thankful?

Oh, for this love, let rocks and hills
Their lasting silence break,
And all harmonious human tongues
The Saviour's praises speak!

What should be another feeling? That we should *love* God. You know it is a common maxim, that "love begets love." Apply this maxim to the subject before us. If love beget love, pray what should be our love to God? Here is infinite love itself, loving me, unworthy as I am; loving me so as to give his only begotten Son! Loving me, so as to offer salvation if I will receive it! If love beget love according to the common maxim, pray what sort of hearts should ours be? Oh, we must feel that our hearts did not love God enough; we are loved

in this way, and yet we do not love again. Can there be a more reasonable command in the world, than, that "thou shalt love the Lord thy God, with all thy heart, and with all thy mind, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength!" Oh, my God, with our little all, Thou deservest ten thousand times more love than we can render thee! There is a sentiment in part of a line of Dr. Young's, in which I rather differ from him, though perhaps it may be considered presumption in me to offer my opinion in opposition to his. Dr. Young exclaims,

"Bound, every heart! and every bosom burn!
O what a scale of miracles is here!
Its lowest round, high planted on the skies;
Its towering summit lost beyond the thought
Of man or angel!"

"Bound, every heart! and every bosom burn!"

There I perfectly agree with him.

"Oh, what a scale of miracles is here!
Its lowest round high planted in the skies."

Nay, glory be to God, the "lowest round" is planted on the earth. He has printed on the first step, "God so loved the world."

"Its towering summit lost beyond the thought
Of man or angel!"

Oh, my friends, may we feel this subject, till our souls are completely saturated with love! I think we should do with our souls—as far as such things can be represented—as men do with a fleece of wool: they put it in water that it may be completely saturated through; and so should we do with our souls on this subject. Let us saturate them in the ocean, till they are completely steeped through. You know, that by placing a piece of iron in the fire, it soon participates of the element where it is placed, and becomes of a white heat; and so let us

put our soul in this fire of the love of God, till all its dross is burnt away. When we look at this subject, away with all sad doubt and fear as to whether you are saved or not. I say, wipe your eyes. Look at the love of God in giving us his only begotten Son; and away with those unbelieving thoughts, that dishonour the love of God, and dishonour the God of love. May you go home with your hearts burning with a sacred fire, such as you have never felt before!

Then what must we say of the folly, and danger, and sin of that man who does not love God? Consider your folly, that you have been so loved by the Lord that He should provide his salvation for you, and yet that you should not love Him. Consider the folly of neglecting that soul upon which God sets so high an estimate. Dr. Clarke remarks on this text: "God always acts with reason; consequently, there must be something in man that deserves the attention of God: and when He looks at man's soul—the amazing capacity of his soul, and the immortality of that soul—there it is that God fixes his eye, upon the value of the soul." See what an estimate the Lord Jehovah put upon you—so great was it, that He did not think it too much to give his only begotten Son to save it. What value do you set on the soul, who neglect its interests? What value do you set on the soul, who only aggravate its guilt, and render it more and more unfit for heaven, and more and more ripe for hell? Sinner! come to the glass of the love of God, and see your folly in neglecting the interest and the salvation of your soul, on which God set such a high value as to give his only begotten Son to save it. May every soul-neglector see the value of his soul in the light of the love of God to-day! And then, my friends, see what displays there are in this love, of the wisdom, justice, holiness, and

all the Divine perfections; and that for the purpose of saving you; and yet you will sin against the God of love, and violate the laws of the God who loves you, and trample under foot the blood that was shed on purpose to redeem you.

Can you estimate the malignity of the sin of that man who lives without the salvation of God? There is no attribute of the Divine character but what he violates. If love begets love, and if God so loved me, and yet I do not love him at all, oh, what a monster I must be! Lay your hand upon your heart, and say, "God loved me, and I have never felt his love stimulating me; I did not think that I had been such a wretch!" Nay, you not only do not love Him, but you hate Him; you banish the thoughts of God from your mind; you deliberately violate his laws, and insult his perfections. Why do you do so? Does He deserve it? Why do you violate his laws? Why do you abuse his mercy? Why do you slight his Son? What reason is there for it? Can you give us a reason why you hate Him, and sin against Him? Do you hate Him because He has given his Son to die for you? Do you hate Him because Jesus Christ so loved you, as to leave his Father's bosom to save you? Look at Jesus bleeding and dying for you! Does He deserve to be hated for it?

The greatness of your danger, like the malignity of your sin, is unspeakable. You sin against the remedy, therefore you must perish without the remedy. Think, not only of the certainty of your danger, but the awful greatness of its consequences! Remember, that you sin against the remedy—and you shall be punished for despising the remedy. "If, under Moses's law, men were convicted, and men died without mercy under two or three witnesses"—it is no pleasing death to die without

mercy ; but it is a happy death compared with that of the soul that treadeth under foot the blood of the Son of God—"of how much sorer punishment"—Paul, who had been raised to the third heaven—Paul, who spake with more tongues than all the members of the Corinthian church, and was a man of the highest talents, could not describe it:—"of how much sorer punishment"—there is eloquence in the inspired apostle's incapability to describe it:—"of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing." My dear brethren, let me have the blood of the covenant sprinkled on my head ; let me have the blood of the covenant sprinkled on my conscience ; but let me not tread it under my feet ! The blood of the covenant was typified when the angel went through Egypt. Blood was sprinkled upon the upper lintels ; blood was sprinkled upon the doorposts ; but there was to be no blood on the threshold. Let me have the blood on my head ; let me have the blood on my heart—but God forbid that it should be beneath the soles of my feet ! "Of how much sorer punishment shall ye be thought worthy, who have trodden under foot the blood of the Son of God ?"

The Lord open the eyes of every poor sinner here, that you may be awakened to your folly, to your sin, to your danger, to your duty, and to your interest ! God so loves you ; and if you will believe on the Son of God, however aggravated your crimes may be, the blood of the covenant speaks better things than the blood of Abel. Oh, that your souls may hear, and believe, and rejoice in God ! May the Lord grant his blessing on these observations ; and may we sing the everlasting love of God in everlasting bliss, for Jesus Christ's sake !

SERMON IV.

A WARNING TO YOUTH.

“Rid me, and deliver me from the hand of strange children, whose mouth speaketh vanity, and their right hand is a right hand of falsehood: that our sons may be as plants grown up in their youth; that our daughters may be as corner-stones, polished after the similitude of a palace.”—PSALM cxliv. 11, 12.

THE language of prayer—earnest, sincere prayer—surely deserves attention. When the soul is in communion with God, the searcher of the hearts, and the trier of the reins, it is not likely to breathe mere compliments, or likely to go and tell an untruth, a wilful lie, to the God of Truth; and, therefore, when we hear the language of sincere and believing prayer, we must be sure that it is expressive of the convictions of the mind, and expressive of the proper feelings of the heart.

My text introduces us to a very interesting situation—into David’s closet. He is bowing his knees before his God and Father; he has his closet shut; and he fancies himself in the presence of his Father. The convictions of his mind are of a very peculiar character; the feelings of his heart are in correspondence with the convictions of his mind; and the burden of both, therefore, is breathed in the language of the text. He cries, “Rid me, and deliver me from the hand of strange children, whose mouth speaketh vanity, and their right hand is a right hand of falsehood.”

This petition, I think, therefore, deserves attention in every point of view. This will appear to be the case if

you consider *the character of the petitioner*. The petition is the language of a *parent*—a wise, a kind, and a judicious parent—who clearly sees the evil to which his offspring may be exposed, and are exposed; and here is the language of the parent's heart crying, "Rid me, and deliver me from strange children." Considered, then, as the language of a parent over a numerous and increasing family, I think it claims our attention. But it is, also, the language of a *prince*; a prince of no ordinary character and capacity of mind; a prince who knew that if a nation were inhabited by profligate youth, they were the ruin of it, but who considered a well-instructed, pious youth as the proper bulwark of the nation. These were the sinews of the next generation; and, therefore, with this view in his mind of the evils of a profligate youth, and of the advantages of a pious and well-instructed youth devoted to God, the prince breathes out his soul, and says, "Rid me, and deliver me from the hand of strange children, whose mouth speaketh vanity, and their right hand is a right hand of falsehood." The language of the petitioner still further claims attention when we remember that he was a parent and a prince *praying under the inspiration of the Holy Ghost*—the Holy Ghost assisting him, and imparting some views of the peculiar kind of evil which he would remove, and the benefits which he would realize. I think, again, the language of the text particularly claims attention, if we look at *the subject-matter of the petition*, as well as the character of the petitioner.

What is the subject-matter of the petition? *First*, here is an awful evil deprecated; that is, the pernicious, deadly evil of a bad example to the rising generation. *Secondly*, there is a desirable blessing supplicated; that the rising generation may be enlightened, pious, and de-

voted to God; and like plants grown up in their youth, and as corner-stones, polished after the similitude of a palace. We may, also, here see that the means are hinted at in the petition of David by which the evil may be prevented, and the good may be promoted.

I. HERE IS THE AWFUL EVIL DEPRECATED,—an evil of which he had clear views, but which he could not fully express—THAT IS, THE PERNICIOUS AND DEADLY EVIL OF BAD EXAMPLE: “Rid me, and deliver me from the hands of strange children, whose mouth speaketh vanity, and their right hand is a right hand of falsehood.”

Here we may see a bad example in its *principles*, in its *evidences*, and in its *consequences*; and when we look at it in these respects, we shall not wonder at the Psalmist breathing out his soul in these words, and crying, Save me from such an example; save the youth, and save the nation, from such an example!

The great *principle* of all personal and practical guilt is that enmity to God and his truth which rejects the word of God, and voluntarily submits itself to the teaching of fallen nature, and of the father of lies. His mouth speaketh vanity; it comes from the abundance of the heart; and because the fountain is there, his mouth speaketh vanity. In his right hand you do not see the Bible, nor Bible truth; for his right hand is a right hand of falsehood. If you trace his pernicious example, his personal and practical evil, to its source, you will find it to exist in that pride and enmity of the heart which rejects the truth of God; and not only so, but it embraces lies, a wilful submission to the father of lies, and to the teaching of those lies which he impresses on the mind. Look at this young man, when his mouth speaketh vanity, and his right hand is a right hand of falsehood—such a man rejects the truth of God; he does not love to

indulge the idea that he is under the inspection, under the law of the God of truth. He banishes as much as he can the impression, "Thou God seest me;" and, therefore, he resists the influence of this truth—that he is in the presence and under the notice of the God of Truth. You will always find that a man whose example is pernicious and deadly rejects the word of truth, he does not love the Bible. The Bible is God's law; God speaks in the Bible; God lightens in the Bible; God thunders in the Bible; the Bible is an enemy to the sinner, and the sinner is an enemy to the Bible. What does he do in order to avoid the flashes of the lightning, and the rolling of the thunder? He shuts his eyes, and puts his fingers in his ears; and endeavours to make himself believe that the Bible is a fable, and that salvation is fanaticism and enthusiasm. Thus he endeavours to shut his eyes to Bible truth, and hardens his heart to reject the truth of the Bible; he does not receive the truth in the love of it.

Such a man not only despises the Bible, the word of truth, but he is an enemy of, and has a secret dislike to, the ministers of truth. You never see a man who hates the truth love the minister of truth; his mouth speaketh vanity, and his right hand is a right hand of falsehood. It is always the great design of the enemy of souls to lower the character of the minister, and to lower the office of the minister; and in the same measure as the one is lowered, the influence of the other is diminished. The man whose mouth speaketh vanity never speaketh well of ministers; he has always some opprobrium to give them, or there are some inuendoes; the minister of God is not a man of truth in his eye, he is not an ambassador of Christ in his estimation, he is not seeking the glory of Christ in his view. He resists the Spirit of

truth; but the Holy Ghost will not leave him, He visits him again and again. In spite of himself, Bible truth will come to his mind; in spite of himself, the flashes of lightning will come and startle him; in spite of himself, he hears the thunder—he cannot effectually stop his ears. The Holy Ghost will make him see, and will make him feel, in spite of himself. Thus he resists the Spirit of truth, rejects the Spirit of truth, and rejects the counsel of God against himself. These are the evidences of a bad example; and look at its consequences on his mind!

What are the *consequences* of the principle of rejecting the truth of God, the God of truth; despising the word of truth; despising the minister of truth; and resisting the Spirit of Truth? What are the consequences to the man's *mind*? It is a dungeon of darkness! the carnal mind is darkness itself. When a poor man is in darkness, nothing can enlighten him but the candle of divine truth; and when the Holy Ghost renews the mind, then he will see the truths through the light. The energy of the Holy Ghost is the only light that can enlighten the mind. If a man blows out the lights and then takes the lantern, how can he have light? "He loves darkness rather than light, because his deeds are evil." He has no desire for Bible truth to reach his mind, and, therefore, his foolish mind becomes darker and darker; he has no spiritual discernment of himself, of his duty, of his Saviour, or of his interest. He is under the dominion of an enemy. Cowper says,

"Hear the just law, the judgment of the skies!
He that hates truth shall be the dupe of lies:
And he that will be cheated to the last,
Delusions strong as hell shall bind him fast."

Look at his *heart*. His mind is a spiritual dungeon; and there is no light in his heart, except that sometimes

the beams will shoot in, and he shuts them out as soon as possible. His heart is the fountain of the whole; his heart is a poison spring; and the salt of truth must be thrown into his heart by the vivid power and energy of the Spirit of Truth; but he keeps the salt of truth out of the spring, and grows more and more defiled, so that the heart is a fountain of abominations, deceitful above all things, and growing desperately wicked, and growing more and more desperately wicked. The heart becomes a putrid, stagnant mass, and grows more and more putrid, and nothing can purify it but the truth of God.

Look at his *master*. It is awful! he is the habitation and the workshop of the devil. His darkened mind is the proper resting-place of the father of lies, the god of this world. The devil can live in such a man; he can keep his goods in peace. If you look at the state of a man whose mouth speaketh vanity, and whose right hand is a right hand of falsehood, you see that he is the habitation of the devil; and not only so, but he is likewise his workshop; he not only lives in him, but he works with energy. The enemy of souls works in his darkened mind; he has false views of the great things which belong to his peace; there the devil forges continually evil thoughts, words, and actions. Hence, when you look at his state, if he die in that state, what a day will the day of judgment be! The Judge will say, "Depart from me, ye workers of iniquity." The sinner at the left hand of God will be called "*a worker of iniquity.*" The man whose mouth speaketh vanity, and whose right hand is a worker of iniquity. The great Mr. Howe says, that it might be rendered more literally *sin-makers*, "Depart from me, sin-makers." Here you see your trade. The Lord have mercy on you! Can you do worse than make sin? So it is when the Spirit of Truth is rejected, and

the minister of truth slighted, then error and sin reign in your heart, and your trade is making sin. The Lord stop you to-day, and turn you to-day! What an awful thing when the Judge says, "Go thou sin-maker; thou hast been the habitation of Satan in time, and thou must go and be his habitation for ever!"

Look at the evil effects upon yourself, and what mischief it produces upon others. Such a man does mischief *naturally*. He is like a man running about in a malignant fever; he carries the atmosphere of death around him. The man who rejects the truth of God, and lives in the constant commission of crime, as naturally diffuses mischief, misery, and ruin, as a man in the most malignant fever diffuses it into every family, and every place wherever he goes. Such a man does mischief, not merely naturally, but *designedly*. He designs to do mischief in the world; he does not like to go to hell alone; but besides that, his master will not let him go alone. His master has possession of his powers, he must be employed in his service; and as God saves man by man, so the devil ruins man by man. As soon as a man is employed by the father of lies, and rejects the truth of God, he always does mischief. So it was with our mother Eve; as soon as her mouth began to speak vanity, and her hand became the right hand of falsehood, she did mischief. See the effect of it. As soon as she believed the father of lies, and imbibed the poison of infidelity, "has God said so?"—as soon as the devil persuaded her to come under his tyrannical government, she sinned against God, her mouth spake vanity, her right hand became a right hand of falsehood, and she ruined herself, and then her husband. So it was with Jeroboam. As soon as Jeroboam rejected the true God, and the worship, and service, and house of the true God, then he led his nation

into sin. You know that the Holy Ghost has written Jeroboam's epitaph with a black line, if possible blacker than the blackness of darkness: "Jeroboam the son of Nebat, which made Israel to sin." So it was with Saul of Tarsus; he was a blasphemer, and a persecutor; yes, he tells us he was not content to blaspheme alone, but he compelled others to blaspheme.

Thus you see the consequences upon others; but we will select one particular case; for after all generals we must come to particulars. See the consequences and deadly pernicious influence of the conduct and character of this young man. Here is a young man who has fallen into the hands of one who rejects the Bible, who rejects the word of God. What does he first do? He poisons his principles; he cannot go on without he endeavours to poison his principles. He poisons his feelings; if the young man has a little feeling of regard for the Sabbath, if he has a little respect for the ministry, he endeavours to take them out of his heart; if the young man has a veneration for his parents, he poisons his principles; "I would not always be under the old man and the old woman; with regard to the Bible, I do not know whether it is true or not; and as to the Sabbath, you need not be so nice about that point." Then, if he can get his principles poisoned concerning his parents, the Bible, the Sabbath, and the minister, his point is gained. This man's mouth speaketh vanity, and his right hand is a right hand of falsehood. Having thus got his principles poisoned, then he leads him to the play-house; then to a party of pleasure on the Sunday; then he gets him to the race-ground; and then to a worse place than any, and there the poor young man's morals are blighted. He is no longer at a place of worship on the Sabbath; his Bible is never read; ministers are neglected; and the

young man's principles are poisoned. His morals are corrupted; and his expenses are greater than his income; he makes one of a party of pleasure, he does not like to be shabby, and therefore he must pay his share; perhaps he has not pocket-money, or it may be that he is a traveller, and his expenses go beyond what he is allowed, and then he uses improper means in order to meet his expenses; (oh, the poor young man and his friends, I feel for them!) here is the journey to be taken next Sunday, and he takes a little out of his master's till; he begins there, and goes on increasing from a penny to a shilling, and from a shilling to a pound. A young man came to me in great anxiety some time back; I was going to a large town; he met me four miles off, and said, "Mr. Dawson, I have come to meet you on a case of conscience. I was once a traveller, I ran £13 behind, and by false accounts cheated my master. It has been upon my conscience ever since; and I intend to pay my master with compound interest; and yet, I do not know whether it is right, because since I left he has failed, and his affairs are now in the hands of his assignees. I do not know whether I should remit the money to them, or to my master." I thought his business was with his master, he was solvent when the transaction took place; and if he had a mind to cheat the assignees, the young man had nothing to do with that. But still the £13 pressed upon his conscience. A young man in such a case goes on, but at last he gets found out; he runs the country, and his principles are poisoned; he believes there is neither God nor devil, heaven nor hell; he flies to the razor, the river, or the poison, and there shortens his days; and the father and the mother cry, "Oh, my son, my son, would God I had died for thee, oh, my son, my son!" O fathers and mothers, you will not wonder at David, when

he saw this evil, offering up a prayer, and crying, "Rid me, and deliver me from the hand of strange children, whose mouth speaketh vanity, and whose right hand is a right hand of falsehood." Pray, father, pray,—pray, mother, pray that your lovely sons may be led from such agents of sin, and death, and hell!

We see a young female in the hands of this creature, this devil incarnate, whose mouth speaketh vanity, and whose right hand is a right hand of falsehood. He will lie, he will curse, he will swear, he will do anything, if he can only destroy the finest affections; and when this vile creature has gained his ends, perhaps he deserts her after all! He overcomes; he triumphs; he despises; and there the poor creature is left. She turns aside with weeping eyes, and says, "I shall be found out; I shall break my mother's heart; I shall shorten my father's days! Woe is me—I wish I had never been born! my soul chooses strangling rather than life." Oh, to see a lamb in the grasp of a wolf, is far less distressing than to see a female within the reach of that man whose mouth speaketh vanity, and whose right hand is a right hand of falsehood! I am sure, therefore, when we see this danger, every parent's heart will join in the petition of the Psalmist, and cry, "Rid me, and deliver me from the hand of strange children, whose mouth speaketh vanity, and their right hand is a right hand of falsehood: that our sons may be as plants grown up in their youth; that our daughters may be as corner-stones, polished after the similitude of a palace."

II. YOU HERE SEE THE DESIRABLE BLESSING SUPPLICATED.

David would have his family, and young persons, and the nation, enlightened, and devoted to God. He would have realized, in all its experience and practice, just what

he states in the first Psalm. When applied to the young man, he would have him as a plant growing up in his youth; and when applied to a female, he would have her as a corner-stone. "Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful." These plants, these corner-stones "delight in the law of the Lord, and in his law do they meditate day and night. And he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also shall not wither, and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper." Here is the plant grown up in his youth, the daughter as a corner-stone polished after the similitude of a palace. God bless my young friends! I feel a peculiar interest in youth, and I love them as I grow older. My young men, I could not abandon this subject;—some of you may be on the brink of ruin, but I hope you have not taken the first step. Some of you, however, may have taken the first step, and I pray God to stop you from the second. Oh, break off from ruin; fly for salvation, from him whose mouth speaketh vanity, and whose right hand is a right hand of falsehood! You may this day be a plant of the Lord's right hand planting, united to God by a living faith, and thus enjoy the light, favour, and love of God. I know you will bear with me, because you know that I love you. It is my affection for you that makes me speak as I do,—and God grant me success! I look at this young man as different from others;—his mind is illuminated with the knowledge of the glory of God; it has begun to experience the light, and God shines in it. Look at his heart, it is a new treasury, and out of the heart rises new things. Look at him in this state; look at him in the constant reading of the Bible; look at him on the Sabbath-day. What a difference between

one and another! That young man is making schemes how to spend the Sabbath; he will go to this place and that place, and he will come back loaded with sin, and crime, and tenfold more the child of hell than before. Here is one young man who goes to the house of the Lord, and hears the name of Jesus, and feasts on fat things, on wines on the lees; there he has spent the Sabbath-day in the house and in the sight of God. And then look at night: there is another man who has been offending against God all the day long, and when he comes to his lodging-room he is in a sad condition—as to prayer he never thinks about it; he rolls him on his bed like a brute in a stall; he turns on his pillow; there is something wrong; he cannot fall asleep. But there is the young man who has been enjoying the favour and the comfort of God; he lies down on his bed, and says, “What a happy day it has been; Oh, what a Sabbath it was to my soul! Oh, what a love-feast to my heart! Oh, what a heaven upon earth has this day been to me!” In the striking language of Mr. Gurnal, “He locks up Christ in his heart at night, and the first thing in the morning lets him open.” Thus he lays down in the favour and image of God. May all our young men be such plants; and then well may aged parents and friends look upon them as young Timothies, and Samuels, and Obadiahs! It is said that when Melancthon had once been to examine some young persons in their catechism, he came back with a divine countenance and said, “I have been examining the young students, and they are to carry on the work when I am gone.” So, when we see you, we rejoice that you will be carrying on the work when we have done. You will have better days than us, and we shall have no objection to see you higher in glory, and no objection to see your crowns sparkling brighter

on your heads. No, no; we shall share in your honours and your joys. No wonder that David cries, "Let our sons be as plants grown up in their youth, and our daughters as corner-stones polished after the similitude of a palace."

You will have the female character beautified, and adorned, and useful. You will have them not as a wall, not merely as a back-stone, or a front-stone, but a corner-stone. Oh, may they be brought under the influence of the Spirit of God, and animated with the love of God; and then the female character comes to be as conspicuous as it is beautiful and useful,—the corner-stone, not of a cottage, but of a palace. I was thinking, before I came into the pulpit, of the pillars in the church of God; and when I saw the foundations, I saw that the mothers of all these had been polished corner-stones. Young Timothy—what a fine column he was in the church of God, beautiful indeed—but his mother and his grandmother were the corner-stones. The history of Bishop Hooper shews him to have been a most splendid pillar in the church of God; but the foundation was his mother, who was one of these corner-stones, polished after the similitude of a palace. The Rev. John Wesley,—the most splendid monument of mercy that can adorn the church of God—had the foundation of his faith laid by his mother, who was one of these corner-stones, polished after the similitude of a palace. Philip Doddridge,—there is a man whose praise is in all the churches, his pillar stands with peculiar admiration on the mount of the Lord—but it was his mother who was the corner-stone. John Newton, although he once was a slave, and the captain of a slave vessel, and though he renounced following religion, yet there was his mother who was a corner-stone. Cecil, though he once made the country

stagger in endeavouring to prove that there was no such being as God, when his mother talked to him, used to run out in the street, and swear that he would go and enlist for a soldier, and then he would burst into tears,—his mother was a corner-stone. When you look at any peculiar character, you find this to be the case. I could bring before you a whole column deserving our admiration and praise. I could speak to you of the Rev. Robert Newton, whose excellency is beyond all praise; his mother was one of these corner-stones. The same was the case with regard to the Rev. Jabez Bunting. And, if he who now stands before you has any excellency, it is instrumentally owing to his mother. Can any one see the influence of a female upon her family, her relatives, upon the nation, and the church, without crying, "Let our daughters be as corner-stones, polished after the similitude of a palace?" Here, then, you have the blessings which he supplicated; and they shall not be asked for in vain; they are blessings which shall certainly be imparted.

My young friends, let me speak to you again. You must be planted; you must be vitally united to Christ by faith; you must be visibly united to the church; you must be taken out of the wilderness of the world; you must be taken out of the wilderness of evil communications. You must be vitally united to Christ, and visibly united to the church, or you will not answer the desire of the Psalmist; you will not be plants grown up in their youth; you will not be like trees planted by the rivers of water, which shall see no drought. Do not form a connection with any young man whose mouth speaketh vanity, and whose right hand is a right hand of falsehood; who would lower your views and estimation of the God of Truth, of the Bible, and of ministers. I affectionately

exhort you to break off such connections. If you do not break them off immediately, perhaps, before another Sabbath, you may commit crimes which will lie on your conscience as long as you live. If they once injure your character, and ruin your soul, they may ruin you for ever. We pray for you, young men, and every heart will respond, "Rid me, and deliver me from the hand of strange children, whose mouth speaketh vanity, and their right hand is a right hand of falsehood." God grant that you may get rid of them to-day! Oh, may you be planted in the house of the Lord; and, while I walk in the garden of God for ever, may I see many of you who have been transplanted out of the world, placed by the river of life, and bringing forth fruit for ever!

My young female friends, have you formed a connection with a young man whose mouth speaketh vanity, and whose right hand is a right hand of falsehood? In the name of God, break it off!—you will be ruined characters if you do not. You may say, "It will be hard work, I shall have my heart-strings drop blood." Better that you should, than that you should be united to him, and that your heart-strings should drop blood as long as you live. The pain now will be but for a moment; but if you fall into his hand, your pain will be lasting as life, if not as lasting as eternity. Do not listen to him; other people know that the man is not to be believed, he has denounced the word of God, and, if a man denies the truth of the Bible, you have no hold upon his conscience. He renounces all the sanctions of God's word; and he may swear, curse and lie; and at the same time, will think it almost an honour to feel that thus he has accomplished his deadly purpose. Break off the connection, and give your heart to Christ; let him have it all. Let this unworthy hand be the means of

putting a corner-stone into the temple of God this day, that shall remain there for ever and ever! How your pious father and pious mother will rejoice to get a stone for the palace out of the rock of the world. Why should you live in the lumber of the world's stumbling-stones, when you may as well be a corner-stone in a palace?

I hardly suppose that such a character can be here; but if there should be a man who has come, out of curiosity to hear what the preacher has to say, what shall I say to such an one? His mouth speaketh falsehood, and his right hand is a right hand of falsehood. You are an infidel; you will not believe the Bible; but you cannot quite get rid of it. The thought sticks close to you, that perhaps there may be a God—ah! that is an awful thought to the infidel—"perhaps there may be a God." I say, then, you are a minister of iniquity, you have perverted the right ways of the Lord, and you may have ruined others. Have I a man here who has ruined others? An infidel yourself, you may have plunged your companion deeper into sin, and have made him a greater adept in iniquity than you are. Have I some here, the spirits of whose departed companions are now weeping, and wailing, and gnashing their teeth in hell, and cursing the day that they ever saw you, or heard your voice? Go on, young man; go on, whether young or old in your career of iniquity, and you will one day join your companions in hell, and then their reproaches will be barbed arrows striking through your soul! Will you like to see your companions in hell, and hear their imprecations?

Now, do you feel this? If you do, you are not dead. Young man, do you feel when you see the mischief you have done to yourself, and cannot calculate the amount of sin to others, the sin to the next generation? We do

not know how far and how deep it may extend. But, do you feel? If you do, there is hope. If you do feel, yield to the feeling. I do not say, with some people, that you are past feeling: no; you do feel. It may be said, their consciences are seared with a hot iron: but, no; they do feel. Would you have us lock them up in Doubting Castle, or Giant Despair? No; I would not have you locked up there. There is mercy for you. You may be a Magdalen; you may be a Saul of Tarsus; but there is mercy for you. You cannot undo what has been done, but you may improve the time to come. You cannot be instrumental in saving those who are lost, but you can save others to the end of your life. You cannot save those who are in hell, but you can lead others to heaven. Oh, fall down before God, and confess your iniquity in the most ingenuous manner; plead the blood of the covenant; give your heart to God; and your Manassehs shall be pardoned, and your Magdalens shall have the seven devils cast out, and your persecuting Sauls shall become zealous, successful preachers. "Rid, and deliver us from strange children"—by changing their hearts—"whose mouth speaketh vanity, and whose right hand is a right hand of falsehood!" And may those men whose mouth speaketh vanity, and whose right hand is a right hand of falsehood, (may our heart rejoice at the thought of it!) may these become plants grown up in their youth, and may our females become corner-stones, polished after the similitude of a palace!

Now, my friends, I have delivered my message; and I trust it has been according to the will of God. My soul is filled with pleasure in thinking that it may be the means of preventing some young men or young women from falling into ruin; and may be the means of bringing

them into union with God, union with the church, to be happy and useful. May they triumph over the last enemy, take their flight to glory, and at last be planted at God's right hand, and become corner-stones in his temple for ever and ever!

SERMON V.

THE FAVOURITE OF GOD.

“Because he hath set his love upon me, therefore will I deliver him : I will set him on high, because he hath known my name. He shall call upon me, and I will answer him : I will be with him in trouble ; I will deliver him, and honour him. With long life will I satisfy him, and shew him my salvation.—Ps. xci. 14, 15, 16.

It has often been remarked by Divines, that Scripture is the best commentary of Scripture ; that by bringing one part of Scripture to another, we best discover the mind of the Spirit, and see most clearly into the deep things of God. The Psalmist, in the sixty-third Psalm, peremptorily asserts, that “the loving-kindness of God is better than life.” And, surely, if we consider the evils that are avoided, and the benefits which are realized by those who enjoy the favour of God, we must see that the Psalmist, when he uttered these words, was “not mad, but spake the words of truth and soberness.” Now if we read this Psalm, we shall have David’s own commentary on our text. In it we shall see the unspeakable privileges of the man who enjoys the favour of God. If it were proper to indulge in envy, we might envy such a character ; but, blessed be God, in this case there is no need to indulge any such feeling, as there is no necessity for it. Envy is a passion that pines with unholy, spasmodic pain when contemplating the superior excellencies of another, which I do not, or cannot possess. But in reference to the loving-kindness of the Lord, we need not pine with envy because another person possesses it, as we may enjoy it as well, in all its privileges and

benefits. No man envies his neighbour the enjoyment of the sunshine. Why? Because there is enough for himself, and his neighbour too: he can enjoy all its benefits as freely and as fully as his neighbour.

From this text, I would, therefore, now introduce to your notice the most desirable character under the sun; and I would exhibit him before you to excite each one to seek, until you obtain the same blessedness. The character that I shall exhibit is GOD'S FAVOURITE: one who is an object of the "loving-kindness of the Lord;" and in reading this passage there are two things which strike our attention concerning such a character. *First*, what the Lord says OF him. *Second*, what the Lord says TO him.

Now, then, my brethren—LOOK! There stands before you GOD'S FAVOURITE!

I. Listen to WHAT GOD SAYS OF HIM.

1. He says of him, "He knows my name."

This is the first trait in his character to which I would call your attention. The first principle of the life of God in the fallen soul of man is knowledge; spiritual, divine knowledge. The first operation of the Holy Ghost in the work of salvation, is a conviction of the character and perfections and relations of God. The Lord says, "he knows my name." He knows my name as Omniscient, Omnipresent, Holy, Just and True.

(1.) He first knows my name as a sin-hating, sin-avenging God! and this knowledge was a means of leading him to a deep sense of his own personal corruption, guilt, and danger as a sinner. My friends, we must know the name of the Lord in his perfections, his precepts, and his threatenings; and then we shall know our own state as sinners, and repent as in dust and ashes.

(2.) But the favourite of the Lord, knows His name

as revealed to Moses, as "The Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, long-suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity, and transgression, and sin." He knows the name of the Lord as concentrated in the name of Jesus, who "shall save his people from their sins." By the *white* beams of God's holiness, (if I may so speak,) the sinner sees his corruption, guilt and deformity: by the *red* beams of God's justice, he sees his unspeakable danger: by the *mild* beams of God's mercy, he discovers a ground of hope—that there is pardon for his aggravated crimes. But it is in the face of our Lord Jesus Christ, that God appears most delightful. Hence we can say to every saved soul, as St. Paul did to the Corinthians,—“God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.” As all the colours of the rainbow meet in one sunbeam, so all the perfections of God as perfectly unite, and more beautifully shine forth, in the person and offices of Jesus Christ, upon the soul of the penitent believer. This saving knowledge is always vital, active, and powerful. In its first operations it produces genuine repentance; in its second operation it produces living, justifying faith; and in its next effort it is the parent of supreme love to God, through Jesus Christ.

2. The next particular that God testifies concerning his favourite is, “He hath set his love upon me.”

(1.) In the love of a divinely-illuminated believer there is the sweet property of *gratitude*. The soul has just and enlarged views of the salvation which he has obtained through the name of Jesus. The evils from which he is saved; the blessings in hand, and the blessings in hope; the salvation in time, and the salvation through eternity

which can, and shall be enjoyed through the name of Jesus, excites feelings of the most ardent gratitude in the soul of the Christian. And then, what gives an unspeakable zest to these grateful emotions is, he clearly sees that he is saved from evils which he richly deserved; that he is put in possession of benefits which he had eternally forfeited; and all this purchased for him at such a dear rate, even by the blood of Christ. O what boundless themes of grateful praises are contained in that song of John, the divine, (and which we can sing before we get to heaven,) "Unto Him that loved us and washed us from our sins in his own blood, and hath made us Kings and Priests unto God and his Father, unto Him be glory and dominion for ever and ever! Amen."

(2.) Another delightful ingredient in this settled love is, *admiration*.

Everything in the scheme and execution of God's redeeming plan is an object of admiration. All that the Lord Jesus is in Himself; all that He has done; all that He does at the present; and all that He has promised to do for his people, deserves the warmest admiration. This holy feeling is experienced in the breast of the man to whom the Lord can say, "He hath set his love upon me."

(3.) But another ingredient in the illuminated love of the believer is *delightful complacency*.

Many things may excite admiration, but cannot create complacency. Nothing can afford complacent delight in any excellency unless we are persuaded that we either do possess, or may possess it. I may go to the palace of the greatest monarch in the world, and be deeply struck with astonishment and admiration at the wonders beheld, but there will not be one thrill of complacency felt in my bosom at the view of the astonishing objects which crowd upon my vision. Why? Because I neither have, nor

can have any interest in them; they are not mine, nor ever can be; therefore, I cannot take complacent delight in them. But the love of the Christian is a delightful love, (as Mr. Baxter called it,) because there is in the Lord everything that is worthy of infinite and eternal admiration; and then there is this thought which produces a thrill of pleasure,—whatever I admire I can, in some measure, possess. The illuminated eye of God's favourite sees everything in the Lord to supply his necessities; everything to satisfy his desires; all his own, which makes the soul delight itself in the Lord, and he rests in his love. Therefore, the Lord says of the object of his loving-kindness, "He hath set his love upon me"—he hath renounced sin as the greatest abomination; he hath taken off the heart from all idolatrous attachment to the creature, and placed it fixedly, and supremely upon God. Hear his language,—“Yea, doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung and dross, that I may win Christ.” He has therefore that settled, grateful, admiring, delightful love to God, which not only gladly obeys his commandments, and promotes his honour, but whose heaven upon earth is to hold communion with God.

3. This brings me to the third testimony of God for his favourite, “He shall call upon me.”

He shall hold the most intimate communion with me. Natural love cannot be satisfied without the most intimate converse with, and enjoyment of, its object; so it is with divine love. Its highest delight is in communion with, and enjoyment of, God. And no wonder, when it sees such beauty, such glory; no wonder when it feels itself in its centre, element, and end, in communion with

God, through the mediation of Christ, such an one can say with Dr. Young:

“A soul in communion with God in heaven
Feels not the tumults, nor the shocks of life,
The whirls of passion, nor the strokes of heart.”

“A holy heart,” says Bishop Leighton, “is the temple of God, and therefore must be a house of prayer.”

Thus, my friends, you hear what God says of his people,—they know Him—they love Him—they converse with Him. Here, then, is a subject for close self-examination. Can the Omniscient eye of God fall upon each of you with complacency and joy, and say, “here is an understanding that knows me; here is a heart that loves me; here is a soul that delights in communion with me?” Oh, may it be so!

II. Let us now proceed to notice WHAT GOD SAYS to HIS FAVOURITE.

Listen to what the Lord says to him! “I will deliver him, I will set him on high; he shall call upon me, and I will answer him; I will be with him in trouble, and honour him; with long life will I satisfy him, and shew him my salvation.”

In this language of God to his people, there are some important truths *implied*, and some delightful truths *expressed*.

There are some important truths *implied*. It implies that though persons may be the objects of Divine favour, yet they are not exempt from trials and crosses of various kinds. Though the guilt of sin be taken away, there remains some of the effects of it, which God's people feel while in the body; and though they are sinners saved by grace, yet they are still on probation for eternity, and exposed to temptations, and pains, and sufferings, and to death itself. All the promises made to suffering christians

would be useless, if there were no characters to whom they were applicable.

Then there are some important truths *expressed*. These are, that the Lord's eye of infinite love is always fixed upon his suffering children; that his ear of infinite love is wakefully attentive to their cry; that his hand of infinite love is exerted to support them under their troubles, and finally to exalt them above them.

1. In the text we see infinite love fixing its eye upon the object of its affection, and lending its ear and listening to the cry of his suffering children, "He shall call upon me, and I will answer him."

How readily does the ear of an affectionate mother catch the cry of a beloved child. If it be in the street and she hears its voice in distress, her bowels yearn, and she exclaims, "that is my child!" When it lies sickly in the cradle, the slightest moan penetrates at once the mother's ear and the mother's heart. What is the reason of all this? Why, because she loves it. Cheering truth, ye tempted and tried souls, your Father loves you; go to Him; let Him hear your cry, and you shall find the truth of these words, "He shall call upon me and I will answer him." He does not always answer according to our expectations, and give us what we directly pray for; but He always answers in withholding whatever would be really injurious to us, and giving whatever would be advantageous to us. St. Paul had "a thorn in the flesh, a messenger of satan," that troubled him, and he cried unto the Lord earnestly and frequently, and the Lord heard his cry, and answered him; not by removing the thorn out of his flesh, nor by sending the messenger of satan to his own hell; but by giving him strength equal to his day, and affording him grace to help in time of need.

2. Then we see another delightful truth,—the yearnings of the infinite love of God towards his children, and affording them his immediate, gracious presence, to support them under all their trials, difficulties, and duties. Hear Him! “I will be with him in trouble.”

Here again God speaks and acts like a tender-hearted mother towards a sickly child. When the child is in perfect health she can leave it in the hands of the nurse; but when it is sick she will attend it herself; she will say to the nurse, “you may attend awhile to some other business, I will watch over the child myself.” She hears the slightest moan; she flies to the cradle; she takes it in her arms; she kisses its lips, and drops a tear upon its face, and asks, “What can I do for thee, my child? How can I relieve thy pain, and soften thy sufferings? Don’t weep and break my heart; it is thy mother’s arms that are around thee; it is thy mother’s lap on which thou art laid; it is thy mother’s voice that speaks to thee; it is thy mother that is with thee; fear not.” So the Lord speaks to his afflicted children. “I will be with thee in trouble.” No mother can equally sympathize with her suffering child, as the Lord does with his suffering people. No! could all the love that ever dwelt in all the mothers’ hearts that ever existed, be united in one mother’s heart, and fixed on her only child, it would no more bear a comparison with the love of God to his people, than the summer midnight glow-worm is to be compared to the summer mid-day sun. Oh, that delightful sentence! “I will be with thee in trouble.” At other times God will leave them in the hands of angels: “I will give them charge over them to keep them in all their ways; they bear them up, lest at any time they dash their feet against a stone.” But when they are in trouble, I will say to the angels, “Stand aside, I will take

care of them myself." "I will be with them in trouble." So he speaks to his people, "When thou passest through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee; when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned; neither shall the flame kindle upon thee; for I am the Lord thy God, the Holy One of Israel, thy Saviour." When languishing in sickness, He will make his bed, and his pillow. When travelling through the valley of the shadow of death, the Lord will be with him, and enable him to sing, "I will fear no evil; for thou art with me: thy rod and thy staff they comfort me." Thus He is with them as their physician and nurse, in pain and sickness; as their light in darkness; as their strength in weakness; as their guide in difficulty; their ease in pain, and as their life in death. "I will be with thee in trouble."

The Lord is with his people in various ways, to support them under their afflictions. Sometimes the Comforter applies and seals upon the heart some precious promise or promises, which are spirit and life to the fainting soul, and makes him sing, "I know that my Redeemer liveth." Sometimes the visit of a minister or a friend is rendered very useful to him. "When his soul draweth near unto the grave, and his life to the destroyers," there comes "a messenger, an interpreter, one among a thousand," and says, "Deliver him from going down to the pit; I have found a ransom." If the man be able to go to the Sanctuary of God, the Lord often meets him there, as He did the Psalmist, and he sees his afflictions in the light of eternity, and he goes home rejoicing in the God of his salvation, exclaiming, "Whom have I in heaven but Thee? and there is none upon earth I desire besides Thee." Sometimes He visits him by the immediate communications of his Divine presence; and then solid peace and joy spring up in the soul, enabling him not

only to rejoice in hope of the glory of God, but to "joy in tribulations also." Then it is the Christian can sing, with tears of joy,

"Labour is rest, and pain is sweet,
If thou my God art here."

Come, then, ye afflicted, tossed with tempest, and not yet comforted, look upward, and pour out your hearts to Him who has said, "He shall call upon me, and I will answer him; I will be with him in trouble." Say not then, "The Lord hath forsaken me; the Lord hath forgotten me." Forget you! "Can a woman forget her sucking child, that she should not have compassion upon the son of her womb? yea, she may forget, yet will I not forget thee." Ah, no, that cannot be, while this text is in the Bible: "I will be with him in trouble!"

3. The boundless Love of God is still further manifested to his people,—*"I will deliver him."*

Not only will He support under afflictions, but He will deliver them out of their troubles. His people shall not always suffer: when the end for which they were afflicted is answered, then, at the moment which of all others is the best for them, they shall be delivered. The wheels of Providence are like the wheels which Ezekiel saw, "they are full of eyes round about;" so that all their revolutions are the result of Infinite Wisdom.

The deliverance of his people has always strikingly displayed this fact: it never came a minute too soon, it never was deferred a minute too long. The Lord does not say by what means He will deliver. He sometimes uses very unlikely means; nay, He sometimes interferes in a way which at first, to us, appears unlikely to produce the desired result. Sometimes he permits a smaller evil to fall upon us to prevent a greater. Who can tell

what dangers are avoided, or evils prevented by affliction itself? Should we not have run into the pit, had He not hedged up our way with thorns? and a man had better have his skin a little torn, than his bones broken in pieces, beyond the possibility of recovery. And many times He has not only prevented a greater evil by permitting a smaller one to fall upon us, but ultimately produced a greater good by it. So it was with the late Mr. Fletcher. When at Lisbon, he had settled to go into the army; accepted a Captain's commission; engaged to serve the king of Portugal on board a man-of-war which was just getting ready, with all speed, to sail for Brazil; but one morning, a little before she sailed, the maid, in waiting on him, let the tea-kettle fall, and so scalded his leg, that he kept his bed for a considerable time, during which the ship sailed for Brazil, and left him behind. No doubt but that the day the ship sailed would be a day of deep mortification to him. Methinks he would say, "O this careless girl, to scald my leg, and thus prevent me from sailing to Brazil, where it is more than probable I should have obtained considerable wealth, and honour, and pleasure, and friends. But now the ship is gone, and all my splendid golden schemes are blasted, and I am left a lame man at Lisbon." Such thoughts would naturally pierce the heart of Mr. Fletcher. But what would he say when he was informed that the ship was never heard of more? He would be speechless, and adore; he would see that the Lord delivered him from a watery grave, by permitting the maid to scald his leg. And what do we say? that, by this accident, as some would call it, Mr. Fletcher's projects were thwarted, that he might turn his attention to England: that he should there get his soul truly converted to God; that he should become an able

minister of the New Testament; that he should take up his pen and write those works which shall live as long as the English language, and be read by succeeding generations, with renewed pleasure and profit. We may say, Blessed be God that ever the maid scalded Mr. Fletcher, so that he did not take that voyage by which his body, his talents, his usefulness, and his name would have been buried in eternal oblivion, and by which he was spared to be one of the greatest and best men that ever lived. Thus the Lord delivers by means which, at the time, appear to us very unlikely. Here the compassion of the tender-hearted mother fails; she may listen to the cry of her child; she may attend to and sympathize with it; she may support it a little under affliction; but she cannot deliver. Blessed be God, that He reiterates the expression, "I will deliver him." He repeats it, to make it sure; so that every child of God may say, with the three young men in the presence of Nebuchadnezzar, "Our God whom we serve is able to deliver, yea, and He will deliver us out of thine hand, O king!"

4. But the Lord will not only support his people under, and deliver them out of their afflictions, but will exalt them above their troubles. He not only says, "I will deliver him;" but he adds, "I will set him on high."

Here, then, you see that God will also elevate and dignify his people; and this is often done by their afflictions. Joseph was in prison, but the Lord was with him, and delivered him, and exalted him; and we don't know there was any way for Joseph to travel to the summit of honour to which he was raised, but by the way which the Lord led him. Had he not been imprisoned, the butler and the baker would not have been his companions; their dreams would not have come to his ear; the interpretation would not have been given;

Pharaoh would have known nothing of the excellent young Hebrew. But the Lord knew his situation, and had not forgotten His truth, "I will deliver him; I will set him on high;" and, at the very best moment for Joseph, for Pharaoh, and for Egypt, Joseph was liberated and elevated.

Afflictions are rough stones in the believer's journey to heaven, upon which he shall step to higher eminences in grace, and a higher throne in glory. God will exalt them by their afflictions; they may therefore say, "Our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory." The graces and the benefits of sanctified afflictions are like money put out at compound interest, which in a little time we shall receive again with amazing increase. Suppose, when a child is born, the father should put out a thousand pounds at compound interest, at ten per cent., and this was to multiply until he was twenty-one years of age, he would receive nearly eight times the original amount. While he was under age, he might be under tutors and governors, yet the money would be every day working out for him a handsome fortune, which he would receive when of age. So, ye heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ, your afflictions, if sanctified, are working out for you eternal benefits; and when you arrive at the perfect stature of a man in Christ Jesus, you shall receive more than a hundred times profit; and shall find both principal and interest in a "far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory!" You will fully, and for ever, see the truth of the words, "I will deliver him; I will set him on high."

5. This text, too, carries our thoughts into eternity. The Lord says to his favourite, "I will honour him; with long life will I satisfy him, and shew him my salvation."

It is in eternity when He will especially and openly honour his people. He honours their disembodied spirits with a place, and a state of solid happiness. When St. John saw them in his visions of heaven, he saw them in a state of honour and happiness. He saw the number to be ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands, a multitude which no man could number. He heard them sing the new song, "Thou art worthy, for Thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God, by Thy blood, out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation." He saw them "before the throne of God, serving Him day and night in his temple." He saw that God had wiped away tears from their eyes for ever. See, then, the honours and happiness of those "who have come out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb;" and then we see unnumbered witnesses to those truths, "I will honour him; I will set him on high." The Lord grant we may be added to the number!

But the period when the Lord will fully accomplish these words to his people, will be on the morning of the resurrection. Then! Then He will "honour them; he will set them on high!" He will honour them with bodies fashioned like unto his own glorious body; bodies of which we have no idea in our present state. St. Paul says they shall be glorious, powerful, spiritual, incorruptible bodies. Then shall it be seen, "what shall be done to the man whom the King delighteth to honour." It cannot be doubted but the saints, at that day, will be the most glorious, the most beautiful creatures that were ever seen. Jesus will so honour his people as to constitute it one great object of the day of judgment, visibly to display his wisdom, power and love in their salvation. "He shall come to be glorified in his saints, and to be

admired in all them that believe." Then will He honour his people before his holy angels, when He lets them see that his servants have a share in the throne, the honours, and the happiness of their Divine Saviour. He honours them before lost sinners; before the devil and his angels, to let them see that He loved his people, with an infinite and everlasting love: and that it was by their own act and deed that those miserable wretches shut themselves out of heaven, and shut themselves up in hell. He will honour his people with the cheering, cloudless sunshine of his smile. His voice will sound sweeter than music itself, and assembled worlds will hear Him say to his people, "Come ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world." "Well done, good and faithful servants, enter ye into the joy of your Lord." And now by faith behold the heirs of God, and joint-heirs of Christ, put into full possession of their mansions, their throne, their kingdom, their glory! See ten thousand times ten thousand proofs that He is faithful who promised, "I will set him on high; I will honour him; with long life will I satisfy him, and shew him my salvation."

6. There is another blessing added to all the rest, the *employment* and *enjoyment* of the honoured saints of God in heaven. The Lord says, "I will show him my salvation."

The employment and enjoyment of heaven will be delightfully perfect, both in the ocean whence both rise, the medium through which they flow, and the vessel which receives them. Their employments and enjoyments have their origin in the salvation of God: "I will shew him my salvation." Here is an ocean of infinities; "where all our thoughts are drowned." God's salvation

in creation! God's salvation in redemption! God's salvation in providence! God's salvation in grace! This the Lord will shew to the enraptured gaze of his people. The review of all this will afford matter of wonder, love, and praise to all eternity. And then there is not only the review of the past of God's salvation in creation, redemption, providence, and grace; but there will be added the boundless survey of the present salvation of Glory! I will shew him my salvation in the time that is past. I will shew him my salvation in his present state of perfect bliss; and I will shew him my salvation in its future glory, as far as his present state can bear.

Thus the employment and enjoyment of heaven consists in the rapturous gaze of the salvation of God, ever opening to the perfect and glorified eye, fresh displays of the heights, and depths, and lengths, and breadths of this salvation through all eternity! Yes, eternity runs through all; his deliverance; his security; his exaltation; his honour; his happiness, all for ever! "With long life will I satisfy him, and shew him my salvation." Oh, *Eternity*! ETERNITY! What unutterable emphasis it gives to all our joys; joy pure, perfect, increasing, and ETERNAL! Joy of the Lord, as rich as he can communicate; as full as our vessels can hold; and as lasting as Eternity! Oh, my friends, who would not be one of God's favourites, of whom and to whom he can address the language of the text, in its full meaning, through the period of time, and through eternity? Such, may you and I be found, in the day of the Lord! Amen and Amen.

I would now conclude with saying a few words more by way of improvement. This subject calls for the most serious *self-examination*. Why? Because so much

depends upon it. To be a favourite of God, is the most interesting state that any one can be in; because, if I am not an object of his favour, I am an object of his displeasure. If I am not a favourite of God, I not only lose the greatest blessings, but I am exposed to the greatest curses; therefore, of all enquiries there is not one equal to this,—Am I in the favour of God or not? Have I the characteristics of his favourite? Do I know Him, love Him, live to Him, and with Him? Never rest until these enquiries can be satisfactorily answered in the affirmative. I may say in a humble degree with Moses, and call upon you to “Set your hearts unto all the words which I testify among you this day; for it is not a vain thing for you; because it is your life.” O yes, “the favour of God is better than life!” And the displeasure of God is worse than death! O then, ascertain as precisely as possible, the state in which your soul is; and if you have not the marks of God’s children, hesitate not a moment, but *fly*—FLY to Christ with all your heart! and fully give up all your sins, that he may destroy them; and as fully give up your souls, that He may save them. “God is in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them.”

Haste, sinner, haste! There is no time to be lost! Let the evil of sin, the danger of a sinner, the fear of death, and the love of God, all unite to urge you *immediately* to seek for the salvation of God; and never, never rest until your sins are pardoned, and your souls accepted, and the Lord can address you in the language of the text,—“Because he hath set his love upon me, therefore will I deliver him: I will set him on high, because he hath known my name. He shall call upon me, and I will answer him: I will be with him in trouble;

I will deliver him, and honour him. With long life will I satisfy him, and shew him my salvation."

You who do know and love the Lord, consider your high dignity, and your inestimable privileges; and let your love, your dependance, your praises be worthy of your character. Grovel no longer in the dust; but come to this exhaustless mine of riches, this boundless ocean of comforts; and bid farewell to all heart-rending anxiety and tormenting fear. And let the "mourners in Zion now exchange beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness." Look at the loving-kindness of the Lord, as he here stands before you! Take the glass of this Psalm in general, and of these verses in particular, and with the sunshine of the Christian dispensation beaming forth, fix your gaze upon God reconciled in Christ. Behold the glory of God softened, and beautified in the face of Christ; and gaze until the highest ardours of love are kindled on the altar of your heart. Gaze! until your confidence runs parallel with your love. Gaze! until your triumph is equal to both, and you can glory in tribulation also, and sing in afflictions,—“Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?” “Nay,” says the apostle—afflicted Christian, catch his spirit, and respond with your exulting heart, “Nay,” not one, nor all these troubles united, shall separate us from the love of Christ. Separate us! No, Jesus will more readily communicate his love to us, and we shall more affectionately adhere to Him. Separate us! No, we shall cleave closer to each other; and in a little—little time, our Lord will deliver us out of our afflictions, and exalt us above them, and set us on high beyond their reach for ever; and then—then our tri-

umphal song shall be, "We are more than conquerors through Him that loved us!" Amen, Alleluia, Amen!

SERMON VI.

THE ENLIGHTENED, YET DISOBEDIENT SERVANT, BEATEN WITH MANY STRIPES.

“And that servant, which knew his Lord’s will, and prepared not himself, neither did according to his will, shall be beaten with many stripes.”—LUKE xii. 47.

THE situation in which I stand now is a very peculiar one, when we conceive it properly, and feel in correspondence with our views. I stand here a servant of God, amidst God’s servants; so that there is not an eye fixed upon me, nor one that can hear my voice, but he is a fellow-servant; it is a servant addressing a fellow-servant. We are, each and all of us, without exception—there is no such thing as an exception; and, if I had the universe before me, I could not find one in any creature—we are, each and all of us, God’s servants. He stands in the relation of a Master to us all; and, consequently, we stand in the relation of servant to a Divine Master. And our disobedience and disaffection do not alter the relation; it is impossible for disobedience and disaffection to alter the relation between the Master and the servant, and the servant and the Master; however disobedient we are, we are still God’s servants; and however disaffected we are, it does not alter his claims upon us, nor our duty to Him. Therefore, I beseech you, my dear friends, lay your hands upon your hearts; and if you ever uttered a truth in the world, this is one—“I am God’s servant.”

And as such, my friends, He views us; and as such, we shall all appear before Him in the judgment-day. We find the characters that will be brought before his

eye in the day of judgment will be *servants*; and the destinies which will breathe from his lips at that awful day will be to *servants*. When He looks at the left hand, they are servants; and He says, They are “wicked and slothful servants,” “bind them hand and foot”—*servants* still. When He looks at the right hand, He calls them *servants*, but they are “good and faithful servants;” “well done.” So as you appear now in his Divine Presence, so will you appear then—as his servants; and we are, each and all of us, either “wicked and slothful servants,” or “good and faithful servants.”

Let this view live in our minds, this view be imprinted on our consciences; and may we there feel the truth—I am either an obedient or disobedient, I am either a loyal or a rebellious servant of the Lord; I am either squandering my Master’s talents and misusing my Master’s hours, or I am improving my Master’s talents, and glorifying my Master, as far as I can do it.

“That servant, which knew his Lord’s will, and prepared not himself, neither did according to his will”—still he was a servant; He did not say that rebel, nor that creature, but—“That servant which knew his Lord’s will, and prepared not himself, neither did according to his will, shall be beaten with many stripes.”

The following views rise to our notice; upon which I would fix my attention and yours. And may our Divine Master accompany them with his presence and power, and may every “wicked and slothful servant” go home an obedient servant this night. Lord! win every heart, and save all. It is evident, my friends, *first*, that the Lord Jehovah is our just and lawful Master, and very properly and legitimately claims our supreme affection for his excellencies, and our entire obedience to his laws; *secondly*, that our Divine Master has afforded us es-

pecially the clearest knowledge of Himself and of his right over us, and of his will towards us, and of his expectations from us; *thirdly*, it is evident, from the choice and conduct of many, that, though they know their Master's will, and must know it, they do not "prepare themselves nor do according to his will;" and, *lastly*, the sin of such men is stamped with peculiar malignity, and, without pardon, it will be followed by the severest punishment; concluding with a more practical and personal application.

I. First, this proposition seems to arrest our attention, and deserves it too—*The Lord Jehovah is our just and lawful Master, and legitimately claims our supreme affection for his excellencies, and our entire obedience to his laws.*

Are his claims well founded or not? I think, my friends, the more we look at them the more we shall see how legitimately they are founded. He makes his claims, and He has a right to them.

Has He not a right to our supreme affection, and our entire devotedness to his will, as our *Creator*? "He it is that made us, and not we ourselves; we are his people, and the sheep of his pasture." He has made us what we are—sentient, and immortal, and accountable creatures, capable of knowing our Master, and loving our Master, and serving our Master, and glorifying our Master; and He has made us creatures capable of being glorified with Him to all eternity. He calls us *servants*, and He has made us servants; and He has given us capabilities, by which we can fulfil the relation of servants, in giving Him all our hearts, and in "glorifying Him with our bodies and spirits, which are his." Are not his claims legitimate, then, upon our supreme affection and entire devotedness to Him as our Creator? When a man

builds his house, he thinks he has a right to the house he has built, because he was the builder. A father thinks he has a right to the affection and obedience of his child, because he was the secondary instrument of giving it life; and who disputes the claims of a wise and pious father to the affection and obedience of his child?—no one does. And yet, my dear friends, what are these claims which are considered proper and legitimate—what are these claims, compared with the claims of our Divine Creator upon us? So that, when He asks for our supreme affection, and when He asks for our entire obedience, He only asks for *his own* again.

The claim will increase when we consider that He is not merely our Father in giving us existence, so that we derive our being from Him, but that we receive our *well-being* from Him. He is a Father, and—I would speak it with the profoundest reverence and adoration—He has never yet disgraced the name. As a Father, He has provided for us; as a Father, He has clothed us; as a Father, He has fed us; as a Father, He has watched over us, when our eyes were closed; as a Father, He has preserved us from ten thousand dangers. Have we not been in a world of dangers, from “principalities and powers, and spiritual wickedness in high places?” There we are, surrounded by them: and yet, though we are in the centre of such enemies, our Divine Master and our Divine Father has surrounded us with a halo of glory, and surrounding devils have gnashed their teeth because they could not touch us. Consider, moreover, how He has crowned and crowded our lives with mercy and loving-kindness. We do not know their number or value. And, therefore, He who has thus preserved us, thus blessed us, surely when He claims our supreme affection

and our entire obedience to his will, He asks nothing but his due.

Again, my friends—(you know it, and are prepared for it, for we can bring nothing new out of this treasury,)—his claims are still higher, and we may say, resistless, on the ground of *redemption*. Look at the grand wonders of redemption, and then say, has He not a right to our supreme affection and entire obedience? If we had a thousand hearts to give, a thousand hearts would not give Him a thousandth part of what He deserves; a thousand lives would be but a small part of what He deserves. Look at us here, as servants redeemed by his beloved Son. See Jesus Christ redeeming us from the greatest evil—and that is sin; see Jesus Christ redeeming us from the greatest danger—and that is hell; see Jesus Christ purchasing for us the greatest blessings—grace in time, and glory in eternity; see Jesus Christ paying the price to save you and to save me from that deadly evil, to save you and to save me from that everlasting danger and misery, to save you and to save me into the grace and glory of God. What was the price? Blood! His own blood! The apostle, therefore, under the special influence of inspiration, argues this point at once; “What!” says he, “know ye not, that ye are not your own?”—you are your Master’s; no, no, you have no right to yourselves—“ye are not your own; for ye are bought with a price; therefore, glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God’s.” If our Lord’s claims are these, and if He has no right to them, as our Divine Creator, as our gracious Benefactor, and as our dying, rising, reigning Saviour, then, “wicked and slothful servant,” deny your Master his claims.

With many of us, you are aware, we are his by *covenant engagement*. Our parents considered that we

were not theirs—only committed to their care; therefore they brought us to be dedicated back to God—and in giving us back to God, they gave Him his own—in order that we, when we came to years of understanding and maturity, might then do what they considered our highest interest—might love Him with all our heart, and serve Him with all our strength. As far as our parents, then, could engage us to be his faithful and willing servants, they did it. And those covenant engagements are binding upon us, as the servants of the Lord.

II. Observe, Secondly, in the presence of our great Master, whose Divine presence fills this place—*the Lord Jehovah has afforded you and me, as his servants, the clearest knowledge of Himself, and of his right over us, and of his will towards us, and of his expectations from us.*

I appeal to you, in the presence of my Master, and your Master—we know our Master's will; we have the fairest chance to know our Master's will; we have the best opportunity to know our Master's will.

If a servant be at a distance, how does that servant get to know his master's will? By *a letter*. When the master sends him a letter, and he sees the letter comes from his master, he knows it is to tell his master's will; and his master, in the letter, tells him what he would have him to avoid; and his master, in the letter, tells him what he would have him to perform; and his master, in the letter, perhaps, promises him, if he will attend to this, he shall be no loser by engaging in the service; the servant then reads the letter, on purpose to know the mind and will of his master, and then enters upon the work, as a good servant, according to the directions of the letter. You know, my friends, this is the case with us. Our Master has written us a letter; here is the letter, dictated by the Holy Ghost. And our Master has

told us in his prohibitions, what He would have us to avoid; in his precepts what He would have us to perform; in his promises what he would have us to enjoy. We have the Bible, and there is the letter from our Master; and we have an opportunity of reading that Bible, and knowing the contents of it. And this Bible, this letter from our Master, can make even a child "wise unto salvation." Here, in this letter, He shows us what He would have us avoid, by his prohibitions; "thou shalt not" do so and so; "thou shalt not kill," "thou shalt not" break the Sabbath, "thou shalt not commit adultery," "thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour"—thou "*shalt not*." Here, in this letter, He informs us what He would have us to perform—that we should make the salvation of our souls a serious concern, that we should renounce sin and sinners, that we should give our hearts to Him, and that, therefore, our obedience and affection should be entire and increasing. Here, in this letter, He gives us also his promises, if we attend to his prohibitions and precepts; if we renounce what He forbids, and perform what He commands, (and He will give us strength to do both,) then we shall enjoy what He promises—promises of pardon of our sins, adoption of our persons, conformity to his image, support through death, a glorious and triumphant resurrection, and an eternity of heaven at last; this shall be our reward. Now, then, I can appeal to you, my friends, that we know our Master's will—that our Master, in this letter that He has written to us, has given us the clearest knowledge of Himself, and of his right over us, and of his will towards us, and of his expectations from us. In this numerous congregation, I might almost (I think, altogether) challenge every individual, and say, Stand up, man, in the face of God and the congregation, and say—

‘I do not know God’s will; I do not know what it is He would have me to avoid or renounce; I do not know anything of what He would have me to perform; I do not know anything of what He would have me to enjoy!’ Dare any of you say so? No, my friend; “wicked and slothful servant” as you are, you dare not add that sin to your sins.

Again, He gives us the clearest knowledge of Himself, not merely by his written Word, but by *his servants*—the persons who bear the letter. Suppose a master had written a letter, and he had said, Perhaps the servant will want some explanation of this; he would give explanation of it to the messenger that carried the letter, that he might tell it to the servant. So, my dear friends, our Divine Master has not only sent us a letter, but He has inspired, and continually inspires his servants to read this letter, and to explain this letter. It is the work of the ministry of the Gospel, to inform their fellow-servants what He would have them avoid, what He would have them perform, what He would have them enjoy. I think I may say, my friends, was there ever a day since the sun was created, when any people had a better chance or opportunity of knowing God’s will, than you? Was there ever a day, wherein God Himself was so brought before your view, in the glorious and essential perfections of his nature? Was there ever a day, when God in his Son was so brought to bear on the mind, and Jesus Christ, in some measure, “evidently crucified” and evidently glorified before you? Was there ever a day, when the nature, and necessity, and excellence, of the influences of the Holy Ghost were brought to bear upon people’s minds and hearts, more than upon yours? Was there ever a day, wherein the sinfulness of sin and the folly and madness of the sinner were brought to bear

upon men's consciences, more than upon yours? Was there ever a day wherein the excellence of the privileges and glorious benefits of the christian character, his honour and his happiness, his possessions and his prospects—was there ever a day, wherein the pardon of sin, and adoption of the sinner's person, and communion with God, and conformity to his image, and enjoyment of his love, and the possession of his peace, and the prospect of his glory—was there ever a day, when these inestimable privileges recommended themselves to every man's conscience, more than to yours? You *must* know your Master's will, when it is so clearly revealed here in the letter that He has written to us. You *must* know your Master's will, when that will is explained and enforced with all the variety of power, and diversity of talent, and energy of eloquence, with all that possibly can be brought to bear upon a man's mind and understanding, by the efforts of your ministers, and by their various talents all united. And their various ministry is only my Master's servants explaining my Master's will more powerfully to their fellow-servants.

You know your Master's will; for, when you read the Word of God, and attend to the ministry of the Word of God, there is *a holy unction with it*—with my Master's will, when it is read or heard—with your Master's will when it is read or heard. You can neither read that will in this Bible, nor hear that will enforced, but there is a measure of Divine influence; you know there is. The Spirit of the Lord attends the ministry of the Word. And, therefore, when God's servants urge their Master's claims upon their fellow-servants, those claims address themselves so much to a man's understanding, address themselves to his hopes, address themselves to his fears, address themselves to his powers, through the influence

of God that attends them, that they are just the very channels for Divine influence to communicate itself through to you. Therefore, with the written Word in your hands and before your eyes, the ministry of the Word in your ears, and God's Spirit in your hearts (who always attends upon it,) I say, I take upon me the assumption—and I think it is not assumption nor presumption—you know your Master's will.

III. Then, again, the Third proposition is this :—*It is evident, from the choice and conduct of many, that, though they must and do know their Master's will, yet they do not "prepare themselves nor do according to it."*

My friends, you know your Master's will, as it regards *the sins* which He prohibits; and yet you love them, and you live in them. You know your Master's will says, "Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain"—and you swear; and how many oaths have you sworn this last week? how many oaths have you sworn to-day? Spirit of God! bring the truth home. You see you are a sinner, an awful sinner, who know your Master's will and do it not. You know your Master's will is that you "remember to keep holy the Sabbath-day," not taking your own pleasure nor doing your own work; and yet how many of you have violated and prostituted—how many of you have degraded the Sabbath-day, in a very awful manner! how many have done this! Sabbath-breaker! dare you say you do not know your Master's will? and dare you say you do it? Disobedient child to your parents—who are the greatest curse they ever had in the world—that sometimes they have sleepless nights on account of you, and sometimes painful days on account of you! disobedient child to your parents, dare you say that you do not know your Master's will? You unjust dealer—who take advantage

of another person's ignorance or necessity, and, therefore, rob him in the dark of ignorance! dare you say, when you are taking this advantage, you do not know your Master's will? You that are living in sin, and loving sin—you are the proof that my assumption is not assumption nor presumption. There are many in this day, and (I am afraid) crowding this place, who, though they know their Master's will, do it not.

You know your Master's will in *the duty* which He enjoins, as well as in the sins which He forbids; you know, not only what your Master's will prohibits—you know what your Master's will enjoins. You have a soul that will live for ever and ever, either in heaven or in hell; and your Master enjoins that you should seek for the salvation of your soul, and that this should be your first and grand concern; you know this is your Master's will, and you know as well as can be, your soul is in blood and guilt, in the bonds of the enemy, and going down to perdition, and there it lies—lies in misery and sin, and there is no concern for its interests. Soul neglecter! dare you say you do not know your Master's will? and dare you say you do it? You know it is your Master's will, that you should seek, with all your heart, for Divine grace to enlighten, and strengthen, and pardon, and save you, and you know you should pray, from the depth of your souls, for a sense of your interest in Christ, and the benefits that can be given to prayer; but then, prayerless soul! how many of you know this, and yet you live without prayer! You that never pray at all—will you say that you neglect prayer because you do not know your Master's will? How many are there in this congregation this night, that have never prayed, it may be, for months—and some of you, even for years! will you say, you have neglected and restrained prayer

because you did not know your Master's will? How many are there—their Master and my Master!—how many are there, my Master and their Master! who have never been at Thy footstool in earnest prayer, in earnest supplication? Nay—my Master and their Master!—how many are there in this place, that have not only not prayed for weeks, but have never even said their prayers? and saying your prayers and praying are two different things. My Master and your Master has invited you to his footstool; and here are scores, it may be hundreds, my Master and your Master knows, who have never said their prayers for weeks past. Have you neglected prayer because you did not know your Master's will? You neglecters of prayer, do you suppose you have done it because you did not know his will? You know it is your Master's will that you should leave wicked persons and practices; my Master and yours says, "Come out and be separate, and touch not the unclean thing, and I will receive you;"—"A companion of fools shall be destroyed;" my Master and yours says this. At the same time, my dear friends, you know, that, though He commands you to abandon these places, you regularly attend them. Do you go to the dram-shop because you do not know your Master's will? Do you go to the theatre because you do not know your Master's will? Do you neglect the Divine service of God, and the worship of the Lord, because you do not know your Master's will? Do you associate with wicked men and wicked women because you do not know your Master's will? My dear friends, look at these things, and see the duties you omit, and then, though you do know your Master's will, you must be sensible you do not do it. Is it not your Master's will that you should go to the

footstool of mercy, and plead "the blood of the covenant?" Is it not your Master's will, that you should make Jesus Christ the object of your affections, the ground of your dependance, the plea of your prayers? My Master and your Master says, that "in all things He should have the pre-eminence;" He says, "in all things" it is the will of God that Christ should "have the pre-eminence;" and He deserves it. But though we know it is the will of God that "in all things Jesus Christ should have the pre-eminence,"—not in one thing, but "in all things,"—has Christ the pre-eminence?—has He the pre-eminence in your judgment? has He the pre-eminence in your affections? is He the pre-eminent object in your thoughts? is He the ground of your confidence? is He the plea of your prayers? is He first and last? How many of you know your Master's will, and do it not!—live in the commission of sin, which He prohibits, and you do it!—and live in the omission of duty which He commands, and you neglect it!

And, then, you live destitute of *the Christian blessings* which it is your Master's will you should enjoy. My guilty companions and fellow-servants, my guilty fellow-servants of our Divine Lord! our kind Master is willing to pardon; though you have thus omitted duty, and thus committed sin, yet our Divine Master has spared you to come into his house once more, and He has spared you on purpose to save you; and it is the will of our Master that your sins should be forgiven, that your hearts should be changed, that you should be his willing and obedient servants—that grace, in all its diversified operations, should be yours in time; and glory, in all its fulness, yours in eternity. Now you know this, and, at the same time, you do not enjoy it.

My Master, help me!

IV. *The sin of such men, therefore, is stamped with peculiar malignity, and, without pardon, will be followed by the severest punishment.* “That servant, which knew his Lord’s will, and prepared not himself, neither did according to his will, shall be beaten with many stripes.”

My dear friends, you that know your Master’s will, and do it not—remember, your sin is *stamped with peculiar malignity*.

The malignity of a crime always bears proportion to the known dignity of the character insulted. To insult a constable, in the exercise of his official capacity, is a crime; to insult a magistrate on the bench is a greater; to insult a monarch on his throne is rebellion. Therefore, the gradation of crime always rises in proportion to the known dignity of the character offended. Then what must be—what *must* be the black aggravations of your crime, who know your Master’s will, and know who that Master is, and yet do not “prepare yourselves nor do according to it?” You sin against God the Father in his laws—and you know Him to be so; you “trample under foot the blood of the Son of God”—and you know Him to be so; you “do despite unto the Spirit of Grace”—and you know who it is that you are doing despite unto. You, who know your Master’s will and do it not—I cannot make such an apology for *you* to God as St. Peter made for the murderers of Christ. What apology did St. Peter make for the murderers of Christ? “I wot that through ignorance ye did it,” says he, “as did also your rulers.” It is not through ignorance that you commit sin; it is not through ignorance that you omit duty; it is not through ignorance that you insult the Father, and “trample under foot the blood of the Son.” Therefore, your ministers cannot make the same apology for *you* which the apostle made for the murderers of the

Son of God. Nay, Paul himself could say, "I was before a blasphemer, and a persecutor, and injurious, but I did it ignorantly." Our Lord Himself, before the throne of God, cannot make the plea for *you*, that He made for his murderers when they were nailing Him to the cross; at the time they were driving the spikes through his hands and through his feet, He broke the silence, and He cried, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." We must say of you, "Father, forgive them, for they know what they do." Oh! you, then, that know your Master's will, and do it not, see and open your eyes to the malignity of your sin, as it bears proportion to the known dignity of the character offended.

The malignity of your sin, you know, has an aggravation peculiar to it, because it is a sin of the deepest ingratitude. Can you know the measure of your obligations? no; that cannot be, unless we knew the value of the blood of the Son of God, unless we knew all the sin which He bore, the sacrifice which He made. The obligations of creation are great, the obligations of preservation are numerous—we do not know their number; but the obligations of redemption are more than all. And yet we sin against the obligations of redemption—those blessings which Christ has purchased in order that we may not fall into the dangers to which we are exposed; blessings which we have forfeited; and we do not know the value of them. My dear friends, consider your obligations in creation, consider your obligations in "preservation, and all the blessings of this life;" consider your obligations in "the redemption of the world by our Lord Jesus Christ, and the means of grace, and the hope of glory"—obligations, such that a man would almost die if he knew them, to think he had despised them; your

Master has crowned and crowded every hour with them, and yet you know his will, and you do it not!

And consider, then, the inexcusable—I might almost say unaccountable—folly of a man that knows his Master's will and does it not. You know very well that if you commit sin, you shall be lost; you know what will be the result; you know, if you commit sin, and live in sin, and die in sin, you will be "banished from the presence of the Lord;" you know you must bear destruction "from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power;" you know God has united sin and hell, and nothing can separate them but personal pardon—and yet sin on. What a madman! You know, if you omit duty, you must be lost, shut out of Heaven, shut up in ruin; you know, if you neglect your soul, you must be ruined; you know, if you do not abandon sinful practices and places—if the wicked man does not forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts, he shall be damned; you know this—and yet you omit the duty. Pray how can you account for it? Live in sin, and see hell annexed to it, and yet love it, and live in it! Omit known duty continually, omit it deliberately, and know the result of it, and still continue in it! You know, my dear friends, you must be pardoned or punished; and yet, though pardon be within your reach, you are as careless about seeking for pardon as if it could not be obtained if you sought for it, or as if it were not worth obtaining. And so it is with all the blessings of the Gospel. You that know your Master's will, and do it not—pray what excuse can you make for yourselves? I cannot find any; and I think you cannot.

Remember, also, there is an aggravation in the case. It is not one sin committed once; it is the same sin committed again and again, under growing aggravations.

Human laws say—for the first offence the penalty shall be light, for the second it shall be doubled, for the third it shall be trebled, and so on, so that punishment always bears proportion to the multitude of the offences. Very well; then, pray what sort of a sinner must you be? You know your Master's will, and do it not; and that is not in one instance—one sin once committed, or one duty once omitted, or one blessing once neglected—it is the same sin committed again, and again, and again, a thousand times repeated with increasing aggravations. Judge, then, “wicked and slothful servant,” of such a Master! what must be the malignity of your sin. And then, again, it is not one sin committed a thousand times even, but a multitude of sins committed again and again with those magnifying aggravations.

Therefore, you see we come to the conclusion that the sin of such men is stamped with peculiar malignity, and (I pray God, that you may properly see and feel it,) that without pardon it *must be followed by the severest punishment*. My Master and your Master says, “And that servant, which knew his Lord's will, and prepared not himself, neither did according to his will, shall be beaten with many stripes.”

Our punishment will bear proportion to our crime. Hence our Lord says, “It shall be more tolerable, in the day of judgment, for Sodom and Gomorrah, than it shall be for Chorazin and Bethsaida.” Every vessel of wrath in hell, rolling in the ocean of eternal woe, is a vessel filled with wrath; but every vessel is not of the same magnitude, not of the same size. Every vessel is filled with woe; but then, some are large and some are small. Every one in hell is a firebrand, and blazes there, and all assist to burn each other; but each is not a firebrand of

the same breadth, nor of the same height, nor of the same intensity.

Oh! my friends, if this be the case, what must be *your* portion! You shall be "beaten with many stripes." See the poor sinner there; see him there in the pit of eternal woe; he is tied to a whipping-post, if I may so say. There, see how he is "beaten with many stripes." Then comes a poor heathen to him, and he says, "If I had known my Master's will as well as you did—if I had known the sins I was to avoid, and the duties I was to perform, and the blessings to be enjoyed, as well as you did—I might not have been here;" and he lashes him again. Then comes a poor Jew, and he says, "I did not know my Master's will as you did; I had not such a revelation of my Master's will, my Master's demands, and my obligations to Him;" and even the poor Jew will cut at him, and lash him again. Oh! my friends; and then, when your poor, sinful companions, if they go there, when your poor wicked and slothful fellow-servants meet you there, they come and have a cut at you, and have a stroke at you—"It was you led me to sin at such a time," "It was you led me to sin at such another time," "It was you led me to sin at such another time!" "And you depraved my morals, and you poisoned my mind;" and you, therefore, were, in some measure, the ruin of your poor wicked companions, and your poor wicked companions, with thongs—nine strokes at once—will beat you. There will be the fiends saying, "We never had a Redeemer offered when we sinned; we never had a Redeemer bleed for us; He passed by angels, He passed by us, and He came and He lived for you, and He died for you, and He lived again for you, and He wrote his letter to you, and He sent his messengers to you, and He gave his Spirit to you; but there you sinned against

the Father with your eyes open, you despised and 'trampled under foot the blood of the Son,' you 'did despite unto the Spirit of grace,' you forced your passage to the flames;" and they lash him again. Conscience then will be a scorpion to sting, and a serpent to bite them; conscience will read lectures of mercies abused; conscience will read lectures upon opportunities squandered; conscience will read lectures upon the sins they have committed, and when they were committed, and where they were committed, and how they were committed against light and knowledge; and so conscience will "beat them with many stripes." The hand of God shall there avenge a broken law; the hand of God shall there avenge an insulted law; the hand of God shall there vindicate the honours of his government. And there, if your punishment be in proportion to your crime, I say, *you* "shall be beaten with many stripes."

My dear brethren, then, know your sin, discover your danger, and know your duty. You have advantages. All those advantages, by being abused, give an aggravation to your crime; yet, my poor fellow-servant, I tell you, with a degree of pleasure, you know your Master's will; you have not that to learn. That is a mercy, (is it not?) when it is improved; it is a curse when it is abused. Well, then, as it is one of the greatest mercies ever enjoyed, improve it to-night.

You know your Master's will—what do you know of it? You know your Master's will is, that He is willing to pardon; you know your Master is ready to save you now; you know He is here on purpose to win the hearts of his poor rebellious servants. And, consequently, as you know your Master's will, I beseech you, improve that knowledge. It is of infinite importance, you have not that to learn. Blessed be the name of the Lord! we

are in our Master's house, and we are in our Master's presence; and though your sin has been of such a nature as it has been, blessed be God! your Master is willing to receive you, and your Master is willing to pardon you. See, then, my friends, that you do not sin away your opportunity. Is it not an infinite mercy, even to you that know your Master's will and do it not, that you are in the very place where you can obtain mercy; and that, great as your guilt is, it can be pardoned; and vile as your heart is, it can be changed; and, though you have been the slave of sin and Satan, you can, by the help of the Lord, be this night the Lord's free man, the Lord's willing servant. The Lord change your heart! He is as much here to pardon your sins, as He was ready to pardon David; He is as much here to pardon you just now, as He was ready to pardon the poor prodigal. He is here to pardon and save you. You are in the presence of this Divine Master; and though you have sinned against Him with such a "high hand and out-stretched arm," blessed be God! it is not the will of my Master and your Master that you should be damned. He does not wish to lay a stripe on you, unless it be the strokes of conviction to drive you to his feet to obtain mercy and enjoy salvation.

What do you think about it now? You see your guilt is aggravated beyond conception; are you determined to increase it to-night? Do you think the mountain of guilt is not high enough? Do you think your sins are not black enough? Are you determined to try the experiment—that you will go to hell and see whether you shall be beaten with many stripes or few? Surely not. Have you settled it in your mind—you know my Master and your Master's will, and you do it not—have you settled it in your mind, that you

will go with all the weight, the mill-stones of your aggravated sins, and they shall sink you deepest in damnation, beyond any other spirit besides? Have you settled it so? Are you determined to fill up the measure of your iniquities? Are you determined to "treasure up wrath against the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God?" Surely not—surely not. I hope, therefore, my dear friends, you will know the day of your visitation. This is the place where you may obtain mercy; this is the day when you may find it; this is the hour of the day; this is the minute of the hour. My friends, you hear the voice of your Master;

"Yield to his love's resistless power,
And sin against your God no more."

Oh! may the power and presence of God attend the word; and may every "wicked and slothful servant," who came in here such, go away a "good and faithful servant,"—for His name's sake.

If there be any person to whom this is addressed particularly and pointedly, it is to the careless, prayerless child, of a truly pious parent. Careless, prayerless child! you know your Master's will; you have had advantages for knowing your Master's will, more than any one else—advantages of parental instruction, as soon as you could be taught. My dear children, you have had the means of knowing your Master's will; there you see your teachers beside you, and it is on purpose to give you a knowledge of his will, and what he expects from you. Oh! therefore, may the light of God shine into these children's hearts in time, and may these be young, faithful, and affectionate servants of the Divine Master! Ah! careless child of praying parents! you had the means of knowing your Master's will; they taught

you to read the letter, which informs you of your Master's will; they brought you under the ministry of the Word, and that ministry was appointed to explain your Master's will. You know your Master's will; your parents often forgot their own wants, when they were praying for you, and a parent's prayer cannot be in vain; a father and a mother cannot ask grace for their child in vain; there will be a Divine influence given to that child, more than to another; and, therefore, if you are living in sin, you must have performed gigantic acts of iniquity, because you must have resisted an influence of the Spirit upon your minds, which others had not. Careless, prayerless child of a praying parent! consider your danger—consider your danger! If, under these advantages, you be lost, how will you bear in eternal torments to look up and see your father at the right hand of God, and there his very breath to feed the flame, and you to be whipped there by that very sight—and see your poor mother in heaven, and her tears that she shed for you feed the flame? Are you determined to have double lashes with double aggravations—to see your father and your mother in glory, and you shut up in torment? Consider your privileges! You know your Master's will; blessed be God for it! You may go, therefore, as Jacob did, and say, when you are pleading with God, "Thou God of my father Abraham, and of Isaac, do so and so;" you may go as Moses did, and say—"Thou God of my fathers, Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, hear my prayer!" So, poor careless, prayerless child! you may go into the presence of your Master, and say, "God of my father and mother, hear me! look in thy book, and see my father's prayers; and look in 'thy bottle,' and see my mother's tears!" You have, therefore, a peculiar advantage. Will you give them pleasure to-

night? You have given them pain long enough! will you give them pleasure to-night? Shall they see the poor rebellious child become a willing and obedient servant of the Lord Jesus Christ? "Ah!" you say, "I cannot; my poor father is dead, my mother is dead, I cannot give them pleasure; I remember when they were dying I was in the room, and they put out their poor clammy hands, and they gasped out—'I charge thee to meet me at the right-hand of God;' I remember when they were dying, they seemed only to have one wish; they only had one pain, and that was to see me in my sins; and they seemed only to have one wish, and that was their last gasp:—'Lord, save my child! Lord, save my child!'" Well, then, they are gone to glory. "Yes, I believe they are!" Well, then, if you cannot give them pleasure here, let them have pleasure in heaven; let your heart now yield to the merciful call of your Divine Master; give Him your heart, body, soul, and spirit, and, no doubt, your poor father and mother will hear of it in heaven to-night. Engage in the service of God, and seek the pardon of your sins, and the salvation of your soul, and the Divine Redeemer will, no doubt, communicate the information to your parents, and they will sing to-night, as they never sung before, "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain!" Lord, grant it!

Poor backslider! you know your Master's will; the text is peculiarly applicable to you. Observe, that servant, who begins as "a faithful and wise steward"—that very same servant becomes a poor faithless one; very striking that! "The Lord said, Who then is that faithful and wise steward, whom his lord shall make ruler over his household? blessed is that servant whom his Lord, when he cometh, shall find so doing; of a truth I say unto you, that he will make him ruler over all that

he hath ; but, and if *that servant* say in his heart"—here you see, you poor backslider, one in your situation, who *was* a "faithful and wise steward !" The Lord made you, perhaps, a member of a class, or a leader of a class, and you were a "faithful and wise steward ;" but then where are you now ? "But and if *that servant*"—that very same servant who was once "a faithful and wise steward"—"if that servant say in his heart, my lord delayeth his coming, and shall begin to beat the men-servants and maid-servants, and to eat and drink, and to be drunken, the Lord of that servant will come in a day when he looketh not for him, and at an hour when he is not aware, and will cut him in sunder:"—awful whippings that ; awful stripes those which cut a man in sunder,—“and will cut him in sunder, and will appoint him his portion with the unbelievers !” You know your Lord’s will ; you cannot unlearn what you have learnt ; you know the good you have lost ; you know the evil you have incurred. You cannot sin but you sin with your eyes open. Now, poor backslider, I appeal to you ; I come in the name of my Master and your Master, and I tell you—Come back again, my Master will receive you, He will pardon your iniquities, He will put you into the family, He will place you at his table. And, therefore, poor backslider, who know your Master’s will and do it not, yield to the call of a poor fellow-servant, and to the Spirit of God in that call, and by that call. And may that poor backslider be found among the "faithful and wise stewards" again !

Now I look at that interesting sight before me. You see the great business is to inform those poor children of the claims which God has upon their affection and obedience, and to train them up to be "faithful and wise stewards." I hope they will have abundant success. My dear children, God is your Master, the Lord Jesus

Christ is your Master. Sunday Scholars, if you sin, you sin against clearer light, you sin against more powerful motives than other children do; if you sin, if you keep bad company, if you do bad actions—if you sin, my dear children, your sin will be of a black kind, and, consequently, if you die in sin, your hell will be proportionably severe. The Lord grant a blessing on Sunday-School tuition: the Lord grant the grace of God may shine into the hearts of these children; and the Lord grant that in our Sunday Schools thousands of “good and faithful servants” may be reared!

And in the day when He comes to settle up with his servants—and He will come to settle up with them—in the day when He comes to settle up with his servants, the Lord grant that I may see scores—scores that this day became “faithful and wise stewards,” and hear Him say to you, willing and obedient servant, well done, well done; “well done, good and faithful servant, enter thou into the joy of thy Lord.” Lord grant it, for Christ’s sake!

SERMON VII.

FULL AND FREE PARDON TO EVERY PENITENT BELIEVER.

“Be it known unto you, therefore, men and brethren, that through this Man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins ; and by Him all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses.”—Acts xiii., 38, 39.

THE Acts of the Apostles is a very interesting part of Sacred Writ ; indeed, without it the canon of Scripture would have been imperfect. The Acts of the Apostles is the middle link uniting the Gospels and Epistles together. It may be said of the Acts of the Apostles what was said of Lord Bacon’s works: “They contain much of the seeds of things which will be developed in after ages, by repeated experiment.” “So the Acts of the Apostles,” said Mr. Wesley, “contain the stamina of things more clearly developed afterwards in the Epistles.” The Acts of the Apostles contain, therefore, much interesting matter ; and, indeed, nothing else but interesting matter.

After the first few chapters, we find that there is one particular person who makes a prominent figure in this portion of the Sacred Writings. His name is first called Saul, and afterwards Paul. Here we see what he was before he became a Christian minister ; we see how God made him so, and we see what he was afterwards. In him we see a living pattern for all ministers in all ages ; their call, their qualifications, their dispositions, and their labours are embodied in the character of Paul.

When he entered on the work, he conferred not with flesh and blood—he heard an immediate call, and he went

forth preaching Christ, and his life was a career of mercy ; his journey, a journey of love. Like the sun, he carried light and heat wherever he went. He could say, (and oh, may every minister be enabled to repeat it !) “ Thanks be unto God who always causeth us to triumph in Christ, and maketh manifest the savour of his knowledge, by us, in every place.” Lord help me ; Lord help us, wherever we are, to make manifest the savour of the knowledge of God ! Whether in the parlour or in the pulpit, in public or in private, may we always carry a divine odour with us !

Here, as I have said, the apostle was on a journey of mercy. “ Now when Paul had his company loosed from Paphos, they came to Perga in Pamphylia ; and John, departing from them, returned to Jerusalem. But when they departed from Perga, they came to Antioch in Pisidia, and went into the synagogue on the sabbath day, and sat down. And, after the reading of the law and the prophets, the ruler of the synagogue sent unto them, saying, Ye men and brethren, if ye have any word of exhortation for the people, say on. Then Paul stood up, and beckoning with his hand said, Men of Israel, and ye that fear God, give audience.” He rapidly runs over many centuries, till he arrives at that which is the most interesting of the whole—till he gets to Jesus. Never is any subject possessed of interest that does not, in some way, lead to Christ. He runs, I say, rapidly over the centuries of the children of Israel, till he gets to David, and when he got to David he soon got to Jesus, and when he arrived there he was at home, and never at home but when he was there. “ When Saul was removed, he raised up unto them David to be their king ; to whom also He gave testimony, and said, I have found David, the son of Jesse, a man after Mine own heart, which shall fulfil all My will. Of this man’s seed hath God, according to

his promise, raised unto Israel a Saviour, Jesus." There, now, he is in his element—now he is at home: he has got to a Saviour, Jesus. "When John had first preached before His coming the baptism of repentance to all the people of Israel. And as John fulfilled his course, he said, Whom think ye that I am? I am not He. But, behold, there cometh one after me, whose shoes of his feet I am not worthy to loose. Men and brethren, children of the stock of Abraham, and whosoever among you feareth God, to you is the word of this salvation sent. For they that dwell at Jerusalem, and their rulers, because they knew Him not, nor yet the voices of the prophets which are read every sabbath day, they have fulfilled them in condemning Him. And though they found no cause of death in Him, yet desired they Pilate that He should be slain. And when they had fulfilled all that was written of Him, they took Him down from the tree, and laid Him in a sepulchre. But God raised Him from the dead: and He was seen many days of them which came up with Him from Galilee to Jerusalem, who are his witnesses unto the people. And we declare unto you glad tidings, how that the promise which was made unto the fathers, God hath fulfilled the same unto us their children, in that He hath raised up Jesus again; as it is also written in the second Psalm, Thou art My Son, this day have I begotten Thee. And as concerning that He raised Him up from the dead, now no more to return to corruption, He said on this wise, I will give you the sure mercies of David. Wherefore he saith also in another psalm, Thou shalt not suffer Thine Holy One to see corruption." I always admire the next verse, and for this reason, it is David's epitaph written by the Holy Spirit. When man writes the epitaph of man, there are

sometimes some very splendid lines, exhibiting, we would suppose, some very splendid virtues, which, however, scarcely existed at all. But when the Holy Spirit writes a man's epitaph, it is always correct. When the Holy Spirit wrote the epitaph on Jeroboam, He dipped his pen in the blackness of darkness, and said, "Jeroboam, the son of Nebat, who made Israel to sin." When He writes the epitaph of David, as in the next verse, it is equally correct: "For David, after he had served his own generation by the will of God, fell on sleep." (Lord, grant that we may do so! May we serve Him in our own generations by the will of God!) Fell on sleep, and was laid unto his fathers, and saw corruption; but He whom God raised again saw no corruption. Now the apostle's soul was swollen in his body, and he gained the attention of the audience, and seeing their souls sitting in their eyes, he addressed them in the language of the text. I dare say that if we had heard it we should have discovered that there was more than a common emphasis in it. "Be it known, therefore, unto you, men and brethren, that through this Man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins; and by Him all that believe are justified from all things from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses."

In the prosecution of this subject, and the employment of the hour, I would adopt the old Puritans' plan. They had their excellencies, perhaps, more than we; they had their defects, and it may be that ours are of a major character. You will find that the old Puritans discourse on a subject in the following manner. Having generally raised a doctrine from a text, they then divided and subdivided it, proved and improved it. Now, then, we will raise a doctrine from the text, and endeavour to improve it. The doctrine of the text is this, that it is the duty of

ministers to exhibit the Lord Jesus Christ before the eyes of a ruined world, and then when they have gained the attention of that ruined world to Christ, to preach a full, free, present, conscious pardon to every penitent believer.

It is their delightful duty to preach a full, free, present, and conscious pardon; they may do it with the greatest pleasure, and with the utmost confidence; and the very grounds which justify them in preaching it are equally valid grounds why it should be received. What reasons, then, can be assigned why, when ministers have got the attention of a ruined world fixed on Christ, they can thus preach this full, free, present, and conscious pardon? I will endeavour to assign a few of these reasons. I remember reading, some few years since, of the late Robert Robinson—a man of extraordinary genius—addressing the Baptist students; and, in the course of his address, he says, “Be sure that you hold up Christ before the eyes of your congregations. Stand you behind Him; let not so much as your little finger be seen.” Lord help me to do this! I would endeavour to hold up Jesus before the congregation this morning; I would stand behind Him; I would not have you see my little finger; and when you have fixed your unflinching gaze on Christ, I will speak over his shoulder, and say, “Be it known unto you, therefore, men and brethren, that through this Man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins; and by Him all that believe are justified from all things.”

For what reasons, then, are we to preach with such pleasure and confidence this delightful truth?

I. One reason is, *The mysterious union of the Divine and human nature in the person of Christ.* “Through this Man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins.”

Why through this Man? Because this is such a Man

as never was seen before, and such a Man as there never will be another. This Man is "God manifest in the flesh ;" this Man is "the brightness of his Father's glory, and the express image of his person ;" and there is, therefore, the most perfect union of Godhead with manhood. In consequence of this union, He becomes the proper object of our faith, and, therefore, the proper object of our preaching. If Jesus Christ were but a mere man, whatever other people might do, we could not have preached with pleasure and confidence pardon through Him ; we could not have offered pardon through this good Man and best of Men. Had He been a thousand times better than those who call Him a mere Man could have imagined Him to be, still, as a mere man, we could not have obtained salvation through Him. It would have sounded strange in our ears to have exhibited Abraham, the father of the faithful, before us, and to have said that through him was preached to us the forgiveness of sin ; or to have said that through Daniel was preached to us the forgiveness of sin. It would have been *mere sound*—there would have been no *vitality* in it—it would have reached the *ear*, but it would never have reached the *heart*. But when we see in the Lord Jesus Christ the Divine and human natures united, then we can say, through this God-man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sin. Pray what merit could there be in the actions or sufferings of a mere man ? There could be no merit in him, however excellent he might be ; for, when he had done all, he would only have done what was commanded him. I will endeavour to illustrate this by a comparison, though the comparison, I confess, is unjust,—for, strictly speaking, we cannot make any comparison. Gold in bullion is valuable, but it is not the circulating medium of the country, and, before it can become so, it must be melted down, and stamped

with the king's arms on the one side and the king's image on the other; and when thus stamped, it becomes the circulating medium of the country, and answers all the purposes for which it was designed and desired. Now, if Jesus Christ had been the best of mere men—a thousand times better than imagination can conceive—but the comparison fails—the actions and sufferings of Jesus Christ were mere gold in the bullion; they were not the circulating medium. But when I consider the Divine nature in union with the human nature, then I see that the actions and sufferings of the Lord Jesus Christ are stamped with the king's arms and authority on the one side and the king's image on the other, and thus they become the circulating medium of salvation, and you will allow me to say that they will pay every man's debts on this side hell. Then, through this Man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins.

II. Another ground of comfort connected with this is, *The infinite merits of his vicarious sufferings, and offering upon the cross.*

We point you to this Man on the cross, and you there see Him bearing our sins in his own body on the tree. Oh! there is infinite merit—and even *infinite* is a poor word in that case—in the sacrifice of this God-man offered on the cross! Prophets always looked at Him on the cross, and they saw pardon through Him; prophets always looked at the cross, and there they proclaimed pardon; and the pardoned sinner in heaven cannot forget the blood of the cross. The sole song of heaven's joy is, "Unto Him that washed us in his own blood." "He has redeemed us to God by his blood." Some persons call themselves *rational* believers, and consequently they call us *irrational* believers. But we *irrational* believers can give no *rational* account of the sufferings and death

of Jesus Christ, but on the ground of atonement. That is our *stupid* way of viewing it. We cannot tell why Jesus Christ did suffer and die, except on the ground of atonement. We say that He could not suffer and die on his own account, and for this reason—sin is the cause of suffering and death. “The wages of sin is death.” The cause of suffering is sin, and the cause of death is sin. If that be the cause, why did Jesus Christ either suffer or die? He was without sin,—holy, unblamable,—perfectly free from sin. He could not, therefore, suffer and die on his own account,—that was everlastingly impossible. Solomon says that “the soul that sinneth it shall die;” but, as Jesus Christ never had sinned, therefore He had no right to die. He did not die by the letter of the law on his own account,—on the contrary, by the letter of the law, He had a right to live. “Do this and thou shalt live.” He had done it, and, therefore, He had a right to live. He could not die by the hand of justice, and the justice of God did not take away the life of Christ on his own account. Justice take away the life of perfect innocence! “No,” says Justice, “my hand shall never be stained with murder:” for it would be murder to take away the life of innocence. As, then, Jesus could not die on his own account by the law, but must live by it,—and as justice, even justice, was bound to protect Him, nay more, was bound to reward Him, and yet He died,—what account can we give of it? Rationally, we can give no account except that which our Lord has done in the 10th chapter of John:—“Therefore doth my Father love Me,” and love Me He must when I do it—because I lay down my life that I might take it again. No man taketh it from Me, no attribute of God taketh it from Me, no law of God taketh it from Me,—but I came as a sacrifice for the sins of the whole world, and I give my life freely,

and offer a life worth all the lives in the world,—a body worth all the bodies in the world,—a soul worth all the souls in the world. He lays down his own life, and there is the peculiar merit of the case. Being made under the law, He must fulfil the law, and having fulfilled it, it must reward Him. It had no penalty to inflict upon Him, and, consequently, it could not be for Himself that He died; but “He died, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God.” When you look at the cross, and see the infinite value of the sacrifice, you need not wonder “that we preach” with such confidence and pleasure “through this Man the forgiveness of sins,” and in such a way that “God can be just, and yet the justifier of him that believeth.”

Look at this Man on the throne—pursuing Him from the cross to the throne—and there see Him exalted, a Prophet, Priest, and King, to execute the purposes of His mercy, and to apply the salvation of His blood. When you see Him on his throne, you there behold Him in all his perfection and glory, seated as a Saviour on his mediatorial throne, till the purposes of mercy shall be accomplished, till his enemies shall be made his footstool, and God shall be all in all. We delight not only in the death of Christ, but we delight especially at his resurrection; “He died for our sins, and He was raised again for our justification.” When Paul triumphs, he fastens on the resurrection and ascension of Christ. “Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God’s elect? It is God that justifieth! Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died; yea, rather, that is risen again, who is at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us.” My friends, fix your eyes, then, on the exalted Saviour seated on his mediatorial throne. In his perfections and offices, there is everything you can want or

wish. And whilst you are gazing on this exalted Saviour, your Prophet, Priest, and King, and your pattern, if you please, I will speak over Him, and you shall hear me say, "Through this Man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins."

Then look at his heart. Do you delight in his heart? It is not only his office as Prophet, Priest, and King, but it is the delight of his heart to bestow pardon. He "sees of the travail of his soul" when the poor sinner comes for pardon; it gives joy, such as angels can never feel, to the exalted Saviour. He delights to pardon. Who is a God like unto Him? This is his pleasure, because He delights in mercy, and He loves to give it. We cannot think of a person loving us without pleasure; if we did, we should be something worse than human beings. I believe that if the greatest tyrant who ever lived upon earth were passing a poor blind beggar, and was told that that beggar loved him, his majesty would feel pleasure at the thought. But if a tyrant like that could feel pleasure at such an occurrence, what would the beggar feel on being told that the king loved him? So, in our ruined state, our Prophet, Priest, and King, loves us. Guilty we are, but He loveth to pardon. Vile are we, but He loveth to save. He is exalted to have mercy; He waits to be gracious.

III. Then another thing which makes us feel pleasure and confidence in offering this pardon and salvation is this,—*It is just the very blessing we want.*

Ministers, if they could not carry the news of pardon, could carry no news worthy the attention of a guilty world. Whatever they carried beside to a poor guilty world of beings, it would be no news to them. Look at the poor man in a gaol condemned to be hanged. He has committed an offence by which he has forfeited his

life; and his majesty might send a messenger to this newly-awakened soul to say, "His majesty has graciously taken your case into consideration, he knows your condition, and I have brought you a purse with a thousand sovereigns." The poor man would look at him and say, "What good can the thousand sovereigns do me, I must be hanged to-morrow?" "Well, but I have another message, he has considered your case, and sent you the title-deeds to an estate of £50,000 a-year." "What will that do for me? I may be hanged to-morrow!" "Stop; I have another proposition to make; I have brought you the coronation robe of George the Fourth, the richest robe that ever covered a monarch, it sparkles with jewels and diamonds." The man bursts into tears; he says, "Do you intend to mock me? What a creature I shall appear when I ascend the scaffold with the coronation robe! But what, no news—none at all?" "I have another word; his majesty has taken your case into consideration, and sent you a pardon, signed and sealed by the great seal of the king. Here, I have brought you a pardon—what do you say to that?" The poor man looks at him, and says that he doubts it is too good news to be true. When he has removed his scruples and doubts, he leaps in his chains, gets him around the neck, and says, "How beautiful are the feet of him that bringeth glad tidings, that publisheth peace"—his majesty; *his majesty*; HIS MAJESTY—I love him for ever. King William forever! I shall never feel myself out of his debt." Then he leaps and praises, and says, "O, I shall see home, I shall once more see my friends!" But the messenger says, "I have not done; I have got you the pardon, I have got your chains freed from you, here is the purse of gold with the pardon, here are the title-deeds, and here is the robe in the bargain!"

Oh, my friends, we preach with confidence and pleasure, pardon through the blood of the Lamb; and more than simple pardon—it is exactly suited to *you*. You know that by nature—or, if you do not know it, may you see it now!—you are condemned to die, you are all in the condemned cell of unbelief, and are all tied and bound with the chain of your sins. Now it is a melancholy truth, that, perhaps, six out of ten in this congregation are now under sentence of death; now in the condemned cell of unbelief; now tied and bound with the chain of their sins. All that is wanting is the power of God to get through; and if you have come into this place in the condemned cell, may you go out pardoned! Death is the gaoler, and he waits the command to deliver you over to the executioner—the devil. You see that the pardon is exactly suited to *your* case. Your ministers can come to you in your condemned cell, your ministers can come to you in your chains, execution has not yet taken place, and we can tell you, the condemned criminal, who waits to be brought out by death and the devil to be hung up in hell—we can tell you that you need not die—that you can have the king's pardon. We can point you to Jesus and say, “Through this Man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins; and by Him all that believe are justified from all things.”

Consider the excellency and suitableness of the blessing of forgiveness, your enemies themselves being judges. Sinners do not know the value of forgiveness, but Satan knows it, and it is his great work and labour to keep you, if possible, from its enjoyment. If he can he will lull you to sleep; sin will do; chains will do. When you come under the ministry of the Word, and are roused by it, he hushes you to sleep—“hush, hush, that is Methodist doctrine; you are not a greater sinner

than some other persons, and if you are lost what will become of them?" He knows the value of pardon, and he lulls you to sleep. May God awaken you! When the devil cannot keep you in sin, and in chains, and in a dungeon, and the man begins to be uneasy, and says, "I am a condemned man, it is time to look about me; if I do not get the King's pardon, I must perish:" if he cannot then lull you to sleep by presumption, he endeavours to do it by despair. He says, "It is all over with you. Do you not remember such a time, when you heard such a minister preach. Had you sought for pardon then you would have got it, but it is over. You remember that when your poor child died you thought your sins had killed your child, and if you had turned to God then you would have been pardoned; but it is over. Do you not remember such a time, when the Word of God came with great power to your heart? If you had believed then, you would have been pardoned." Yes, there I agree with him perfectly. Now, he says, "There is no hope for you; you have sinned against the Holy Ghost; you have sinned away a world of grace, and there is no mercy for you in this world, or in that which is to come." But there he is a false speaker—there *is* mercy! I will go with him in the first sentence, but I will not go with him in the second. Though he may try to close up the door of hope, and freeze your souls in despair, yet if you fix your souls on Christ, you will find that the day of grace is not yet past. You have not committed the unpardonable sin; for it is still pardonable; and so we declare unto you with pleasure, that through this Man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sin.

Such is pardon; and if a man be determined to have it, he is sure to get it. As soon as a man comes to the agonizing pitch, and is resolved by the grace of God that

he will be forgiven, I never saw that man turned away. But then, when Satan sees that a man has got pardon, he says, "I will rob him of it if I can. I know the value of it." He thinks that at some time the person may be, in an unguarded hour, out of temper, and then let him utter an unguarded word, and Satan says, "Pray where is your sense of pardon?" Thus, if he cannot prevent you from getting pardon, he will rob you of it if possible. This shows the value of the blessing, even our enemies themselves being judges. Blessed be God! it is a valuable blessing, within the reach of all. May all of you seek it with all your hearts!

IV. There is another reason why we preach with such confidence and pleasure, pardon through Christ to every penitent believer, and that is, *The simplicity of the terms.*

Here is pardon, the very blessing we want. Not merely, however, is the displeasure of God removed, but his favour enjoyed; not merely is the condemned criminal forgiven, but he is made an heir of God. Not merely is he made a subject, but a child, brought to the King's palace, and made an heir of God and a joint heir with Christ. And how must we obtain it? Whosoever *believeth* that through this Man is preached the forgiveness of sin, shall receive it. Whosoever *believeth* on Him that justifieth, his faith is accounted for righteousness. Where a sinner believes the testimony of God, that he is a guilty sinner, a vile sinner, a hell-deserving sinner, and is exposed to wrath; sees the evil of his sin, the baseness of his conduct, the danger of his state—whosoever believes God's record concerning himself as a sinner, and his soul is awakened to the truth, and he feels the truth, and he sees and feels a deep abhorrence of himself, a deep hatred to sin, and sees and feels his own guilt, and breathes out his soul in prayer—whosoever thus believes,

I do not say that he shall obtain remission of sins, but that is a preparatory operation that must take place, more or less, in all our souls. Remission of sins is not attached to believing God's record concerning Himself—Himself as the object of faith; but in the act of justification the eye turns itself out of itself. It is here that the eye turns itself out of its own sins, however great they are, and out of its own weakness, and fixes itself upon the Lord Jesus Christ, in the dignity of his person, the virtue of his sacrifice, the prevalence of his mediatorial office, the riches of his love. And then, when it looks to Jesus, there is in Christ everything that the guilty sinner wants. He feels, he believes—it is the object of his spiritual sight. He comes out of himself, and he lays hold of Christ. Here is the pardon presented, but he can bring no price. What, then, can he do? Why, he can open his hands, and he can drop his sin. He cannot have sin and pardon in the same hand. He opens his hand, and drops his sin, and hates it, and renounces it, and laments over it. And when he has thus dropped his sins, he may receive with the empty hand the blood-bought, freely-offered pardon for all his transgressions. Friends, will you have it? May you open your hands and drop your sins! May you open your hands and drop your sins with all the feelings of a true penitent! When your hand is thus empty, you have nothing to do but to receive, apply, and appropriate the pardon which is offered to you by the ministry of reconciliation. Take it home, therefore, with you, that "through this Man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins." Oh, may some poor sinner get out of his condemned cell now! May he go home walking and leaping as a pardoned soul, an adopted soul, an accepted soul,

turned from the power of Satan to the power of God! The Lord grant it, for Christ's sake!

V. There is another reason why we preach pardon in the name of Jesus with such confidence and pleasure, and it is this: *There is no other system in the world that, at the same time that it brings pardon to the sinner, brings the highest glory to God.*

Next to the death of Christ, this is the wonder of redemption. It makes my heart swell with pleasure, and wonder, and joy, to think that God should join my salvation with his own glory. We do not know why God is so much glorified in the pardon and salvation of the ruined sinner. Here is pardon, the fullest and the freest. Even in the Mosaic economy there were some sins for which there was no propitiatory sacrifice, and, consequently, those who lived under that economy could not be justified from all things. But the soul that believeth on Jesus Christ is not justified from a few things, but from all things. Our Lord can pardon not merely seven times; but such is the greatness of his love, and the virtue of his sacrifice, that He can pardon seventy times seven. And then it brings the highest glory to God, for He is glorified in the very exhibition of pardon to a ruined world. "Him hath God set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past." He has held Him up as a propitiatory sacrifice, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, that He might be the just and the justifier of him who believeth in Jesus. Is not this a heart-cheering consideration? Some may say that to look for mere pardon and acceptance is a narrow and selfish principle; that we should look to a higher object, viz., the glory of God. Well, blessed be the name of the Lord, when I am par-

done, God is glorified. When pardon is received, the plan of salvation, the merits of Christ, the goodness and holiness of God, are glorified. Consequently, there is a delightful ground why we offer pardon; for by the same act that the sinner is completely saved, God is glorified in the highest.

When our Lord was a babe in the manger, angels sang, "Glory to God in the highest, on earth peace and goodwill towards men." If they could sing that song when the Redeemer was a babe in the manger, I think we can sing it better now that He is a prince on the throne.

God is glorified in the exhibition and in the application of pardon. We cannot glorify God without loving Him, and how can we love Him without being pardoned? Having much forgiven, we love much; and when we love much, we shall glorify God. We glorify God when we prize Him; he who prizes Him glorifies Him. When the sinner obtains pardon, he says, "I will praise Thee, though Thou wast angry with me." God is glorified by our devotedness. We glorify God with our bodies and our spirits which are his. I sometimes think that the scheme of redemption by the Lord Jesus Christ is the brightest monument that was ever erected; the most splendid, beautiful, and glorious monument that was ever reared before the eyes of men, and angels, or of devils. When I look at its foundation, I see it based in the union of the Divine and human natures of our blessed Immanuel, our divine and exalted Redeemer. When I look at the squares, I think they are whiter than the whitest snow, and that there is printed in letters of light on every square some very interesting truths. Look at one square; there is inscribed upon it, "God so loved the world, that He gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on Him should not perish, but have

everlasting life." Look at the other square; "This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners." Look at the third square; "Through this man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins; and by Him all that believe are justified from all things from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses." Your anxious hearts say, methinks I see it, "I wonder what is on the last square?" "Wherefore He is able to save unto the uttermost all who come unto God by Him, seeing He ever liveth to make intercession for them." And then what is the top-stone that beautifies and covers the whole? There is printed on it, "Glory to God in the highest, on earth peace and good-will towards men." You will cease to be surprised, then, that we do thus—in the exhibition of our Lord Jesus Christ, when you fix your believing eye on Him—preach pardon and offer pardon with such confidence and with such pleasure. I again say, the very grounds of our confidence in offering pardon, are equally valid grounds for your receiving pardon.

VI. But then observe another verse which follows our text: "*Behold ye despisers, and wonder, and perish!*"

Oh, consider the state and danger of a guilty sinner living without pardon. You, who have pardon thus purchased for you, but are yet living without pardon, I beseech you to open your eyes and see your folly. What! is guilt better than pardon? What! is a dungeon better than a palace? What! is it better to drag on in chains in hell than to wear a crown in heaven? What! is it better to weep and wail and gnash your teeth in eternal perdition than to sing the high praises of God in increasing ecstasies to all eternity? What! is guilt better than pardon—damnation better than sal-

vation—hell better than heaven? Consider your folly, and the Lord give you understanding!

But consider your sin. To live without pardon is not merely a manifestation of the deepest folly; but to live careless and unconcerned about pardon is multiplying your crimes, and multiplying them with the most dreadful aggravation. While you live without pardon, you despise all the wonders of redeeming mercy, you insult all the Divine attributes which appeared in devising that scheme, and which appear in its prosecution. You who live careless and unconcerned about pardon; there is no one law but you violate it, and no one perfection or attribute of the Godhead but what you insult. You who live careless without pardon, you shall wonder and perish. You trample the blood of the covenant under foot, and crucify the Lord afresh. He lies across the road to perdition, and would stop you in that road; the Redeemer lies to prevent your ruin, and you make Him the stepping-stone to sink into deeper damnation. Oh, the magnitude and the malignity of your sin!

And then, oh! the magnitude of your danger! Can you tell me the danger? The Apostle does not attempt to describe it. "If he that despised Moses' law died without mercy under two or three witnesses." It is not a pleasant death to die without mercy, but it is a pleasant death compared to dying with a despised gospel. "Of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God?" Nay, Paul—nay, I think it is hardly right that he who had been in the third heavens—who could speak with more tongues than any one else—should not have told us what sort of sorer punishment it was than dying without mercy. "But," says he, "I cannot describe it—I leave you to imagine it." "Of how much sorer pun-

ishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God?" So you are doing every one of you, high and low, rich and poor, learned and unlearned, who are living careless and unconcerned without pardon. You are trampling under foot the Son of God, and, therefore, adding to your guilt; and for you there is that sorer punishment which the apostle does not attempt to describe!

"The blood of Christ speaketh better things than the blood of Abel." I grant that the blood of Abel spoke some awful thing to the murderer—it sounded in Cain's ears, and he could not get rid of it. By day and by night, no doubt, it echoed in his ears, *vengeance! vengeance! VENGEANCE!*—a brother's blood cried, wherever he went, *vengeance! vengeance! VENGEANCE!* It followed him by day, and it broke his sleep by night, so that he exclaimed, "How can I bear the blood, *blood*, BLOOD of my brother, crying *vengeance! vengeance! VENGEANCE!*" But, blessed be God, in our probationary state, the blood of Christ cries "*mercy! mercy! MERCY!*" Yes, mercy for a murderer. "Forgive them, Father, for they know not what they do." So that even the blood shed by the hand of a murderer, that very blood cried out *mercy! mercy! MERCY!* to this very murderer. But if the blood of Christ speaks better things now, there will be a day when it will speak worse things. If the blood of the murdered servant of God cried for vengeance, what will the blood of the murdered Son of God do? I can hardly bear the thought that you should die in your sins, despisers of that blood. O, sinner! without pardon, how can you bear to hear the voice of God,—this very Divine Saviour, whose blood ye have trampled under foot? Can you bear to hear that voice which, in a thunder-clap louder than ten thousand thunders, says to those at the left hand, "Vengeance! *ven-*

geance! eternal VENGEANCE to the despisers of my mercy, and the trampers-under-foot of my blood! My blood cries against them!"

My dear friends, then, you who live careless and unconcerned without pardon—the desire of my heart and of that of every child of God is, that you may open your eyes and see your folly, that you may see your danger; that you obtain the forgiveness of your iniquities, the acceptance of your persons, adoption into God's favour, and may enjoy Him for ever and ever.

May the Spirit of the living God apply these truths to our hearts! When the Lord comes to reward his servants, may you be found sprinkled with the blood of Christ! Gathered upon the mount of God, may I not see one face before me on whom God shall cast a frowning eye, and the thunder-clap cry *vengeance!* VENGEANCE! May there be no despisers here, who shall wonder and perish! God forbid it, for Christ's sake!

SERMON VIII.

SAVING FAITH.

“And blessed is she that believed : for there shall be a performance of those things which were told her from the Lord.”—LUKE i. 45.

WE cannot be conversant with the New Testament but we must be very much struck with the importance and necessity of *faith*, as the grand means of salvation, which brings the Saviour and the sinner together, and, therefore, brings the salvation which the Saviour has perfected, and which He delights to bestow. I am sure that you who were present at the reading of the Lessons, must have been very much struck with what is said in the third chapter of John, of the necessity of faith ; that salvation from first to last is promised to him that believeth, and that condemnation will follow on the unbeliever. Were you not struck with that sentiment—“He that believeth not is condemned already?” “He that believeth shall not come into condemnation : he is passed from death unto life.” And you know that John the Baptist confirmed the testimony of our Lord. “He that believeth not the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him”—and abideth on him *now*. And you could not have heard the former part of that chapter read without seeing the necessity of faith. “As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up : that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.” Then, again, comes that most remarkable text—“God so loved the world, that he gave his only-begotten Son, that who-

soever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life."

Thus, my dear friends, you see the necessity and importance of faith—that the salvation of the guilty turns on this—"He that believeth shall be saved; he that believeth not shall be damned." Are we justified? It is by faith. Are we sanctified? We obtain the inheritance by faith! Do we retain our graces? We are "kept by the power of God, through faith, unto salvation." So that faith is the most essential grace: you see, we cannot be saved in time, nor can we be saved in eternity, without faith. "Blessed," then, "is she that believeth, for there shall be a performance of those things which were told her from the Lord." Consequently, you see the subject which I would fix upon your minds, and bring before you, (and I pray God that the unction of the Spirit may be in every sentence,) is, *saving faith*. Look at it, my friends, in the simplicity of its nature—in the importance of its objects—in the sufficiency of its grounds—in the propriety of its acts—and in the benefits of its exercise.

I. Look at saving faith, then, *In the Simplicity of its Nature*.

Now all essentials are simple. No man can live, you know, without eating and drinking; it requires no particular learning to eat and drink; a poor man can eat and drink as well as a rich man; an unlearned man can eat and drink as well as the most learned man. Natural life cannot be preserved without sleeping: it does not require any particular mental attainments for a man to sleep; a child can sleep as well as a man; a poor man can sleep as well as a rich man, and perhaps better. Consequently, all essentials of natural life are simple; and so, the essentials of spiritual life are simple; and as

faith is so essential, it must be within the comprehension of a common understanding; it must be a duty which every man can perform.

Now, what is there peculiarly essential in the nature of faith? It is, as you have heard it defined more than once—it is taking God at his word; it is affectionately and heartily taking God at his word. And I was struck with another idea while the Lesson was being read—that John the Baptist gives us the definition of faith; it is receiving the testimony of the Lord: “He that receiveth that testimony,” says John, “hath set his seal that God is true.” It is, then, so receiving the testimony of the Lord, that with our hands, and minds, and hearts, we can set to our seal that God is true.

Faith between man and man, you know, is taking a man at his word. If I were travelling on a road, and I met a person who said to me, “Sir, if you proceed on that road you will get into a desert, and there, as sure as can be, you will be robbed and murdered:” if I took the man at his word, I should stop, and turn aside. If I met another person, and he said to me, “I see you are labouring under a disease; from the lineaments of your countenance, I can tell you are labouring under a disease; and unless you get cured, (and cured you may be,) and unless you get cured soon, you will die; use proper means, and you are sure to be recovered:” if I take the man at his word, I shall use the means which he recommends, for the recovery of my health. If another were to come to me, and to say, “Now, Sir, if you pay proper attention to the directions which I shall give you, you shall certainly gain the title-deeds to an estate of fifty thousand a-year:” if I took the man at his word, I should adopt the course he advised; I should go from register to register, and from court to court, and use all

the proper means in order to secure that end. This is faith between man and man: it is taking him at his word, and so taking him at his word as to influence my choice, and to regulate my conduct.

So, my dear friends, saving faith between the Saviour and the sinner, is so taking Him at his word, as to influence my choice, and regulate my conduct: and if it does not do so, it does not deserve the name of faith at all. Suppose I were to inform a man, that if he were to go in a certain direction, he would get to a place where he would be sure to be robbed and murdered; and suppose he said to me, very gravely, "Yes, I believe you, I believe you," and went straight forward; should I say he *did* believe me? He might *say* he believed me; but when I saw him going that way, and heard afterwards that he was robbed and murdered in the place where I had told him he would be robbed and murdered, should not I be convinced that he did not believe me? We may say a hundred and a thousand times over, "I believe, I believe, I believe;" but we have no saving faith unless we so believe with the *heart*, as to influence our choice, and regulate our conduct. I don't say but that faith is a gift of God, as well as a grace. We cannot believe without the light; we must have the light from above: we cannot believe without divine life; but that divine life must be given from God. We acknowledge that faith is the gift of God; but faith is equally the duty of men. There is a divine efficiency in the word, both in its light and power; that is the gift of God; and that divine grace furnishes a man with divine ability; and thus he receives the testimony which God has spoken, and he sets to his seal that God is true.

II. Look at it, *In the Importance of its Objects.*

What are the grand objects of faith? My text tells

you: they are "the things that are told us of the Lord." "Blessed is she that believeth; for there shall be a performance of those things which were told her from the Lord." Consequently, the grand object of our faith, on which we should fix our minds, must be "the things which are told us of the Lord." And what are "the things which are told us of the Lord," as the grand object of a sinner's faith? My dear brethren, here they are in this book. And what are the grand subjects which are told us of the Lord in this Book?

1. One is, my dear friends,—and one that must be seen to, and one that must be attended to, and must be cordially credited—"the things that are told us of the Lord" concerning *ourselves*.

If we have not cordially believed "the things that are told us of the Lord" as to *ourselves* as fallen, ruined, helpless, hell-deserving sinners, we have not taken one step to heaven yet. And an awful testimony the Lord gives me of myself. In my fallen condition, these are "the things that are told us of the Lord." I am a sinner, a guilty sinner, and I cannot pardon myself; I am a sinner, a ruined sinner, and I cannot save myself. The Lord grant you the power of his Spirit, that you may receive the testimony concerning yourselves! And you will naturally ask the question which every man asks himself when he believes "the things that are told him of the Lord;" and that question is, "What must I do to be saved?"

2. Another subject which is "told us of the Lord," and which must be the grand object of faith, is the *Lord Jesus Christ*.

I can lay my hand on the Bible, and say, These things, from book to book, are written that you might believe on the only-begotten Son of God, and have life through his

name. The great object to a ruined sinner is a complete Saviour. Now when I believe "the things that are told me of the Lord" concerning *myself*, I am prepared to believe "the things that are told me of the Lord" concerning *my Saviour*. And what are these? Look at the depth of his humiliation, as He is there, the child of man. Look at Him entering into the wilderness, and there conquering all his enemies, that He might be able to sympathize with the suffering church throughout all ages. Look at Him on the cross, dying the just for the unjust to bring us to God; making propitiation, satisfaction, and oblation for the sins of the whole world. Look at Him in the garden, as He rolled off the stone, and assumed our nature upon Him again. What are "the things that are told us of the Lord" concerning Jesus Christ? Why, they are the objects of faith: we cannot realize them; we cannot perfectly understand them. I believe that He is yonder in glory; that He is now at the right hand of God; and that "in Him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily:" I believe it, but I do not understand it. I believe that the glory of God shines in the face of our Lord Jesus Christ; and that a ruined sinner can be saved, and that he can behold that glory, and be changed into the same image, even as by the Spirit of the Lord: I believe this, though I cannot understand it. Christ is exalted a Prince and a Saviour; and all authority and power are given unto Him: I believe (glory be to God who revealed it) that He is able to save to the uttermost. However great the sinner's guilt, there is a Saviour who can save to the uttermost; however great his corruption, however he is enslaved, there is a Saviour who can save to the uttermost. However deeply he has fallen, there is a Saviour who can pluck him as a brand from the burning, quench

it in his blood, and make him a jewel in his crown. O, then, believe "the things that are told you of the Lord" concerning Jesus Christ; for, blessed is the man that does believe them.

3. Another thing which is "told us of the Lord" is, *the characteristics, dignities, and glory of the believer.*

If we would fully exhibit Jesus Christ, we must not merely exhibit Him as Head over all things to the church; we shall not exhibit Christ in his full-length portrait until we exhibit Him in the dignities, and privileges, and glories of his people. The "things which are told us of the Lord" are not a *bust* of Jesus Christ, though we see the beauty of his countenance; but the Scriptures are a pedestal, where stands a *whole Saviour*: not merely his head, but his body, in all his glorious costume, and with all the peculiarities of his members. He is Head over all things, to his body the church; and when you look at Christ in his full-length portrait, there is connected with Him his church, and every different member of that church in his proper place. There the believer is pardoned, adopted, sanctified: there the believer obtains the life-blood of the Son of God, and which runs down to the remotest member of the body.

Behold, then, the privileges of every believer. He is justified freely by the grace of God; he is adopted into the family of God: as I heard the Rev. John Grant say with peculiar solemnity, "Heir of God—this is the believer's character—heir of God, and joint-heir with Jesus Christ. I speak it with solemnity—in a certain sense, I have as good a title to heaven as Jesus Christ; for I am an heir of God, and joint-heir with Jesus Christ." Believe "the things that are told you of the Lord," and then you will see God in Christ reconciled unto you, not imputing unto you your trespasses.

Now these are some of the things which are the proper objects of faith. May we see them, and may our hearts give credit to them! May we give the credit which John the Baptist said we ought to give, and thus set to our seal, by experience, that God is true! Don't rest in faith without the seal—the seal on your heart, and the seal on your hand, that God is true.

III. Then look at faith *In the Sufficiency of its Grounds.*

What are the grounds of faith between man and man, in their actions and dealings with one another? Whatever are the grounds of faith in our conduct and actions between man and man, those grounds are in God in an infinite degree: therefore, if our confidence in God bore any proportion to the sufficiency of its grounds, our confidence would be infinite.

1. One ground of confidence in the dealings between man and man is, a conviction that the person we are dealing with is *professing what he understands*.

When a physician comes to us and gives us advice, our confidence in him is in proportion to our conviction that he understands our case; and in the same proportion we feel comfort from it. Now if the confidence between man and man runs parallel with our conviction of his knowledge of the subject which he either professes or promises, our confidence which should exist in the dealings between men and God should be infinite, because God's testimony is the testimony of Infinite Wisdom, which cannot err or be deceived. Whatever things, therefore, that are "told us of the Lord," they are the out-beamings of infinite wisdom, the breathings of perfect knowledge; they are the language of Him who is infinitely wise, and therefore cannot err or be deceived.

2. Again, our confidence in a man is exactly in proportion to our consciousness of *his veracity*.

He may have a knowledge of the things which he professes, but it is possible that he may not be faithful. If there be the slightest suspicion that he may not be true to his word, that suspicion destroys confidence directly. But there need be no suspicion on that subject with regard to "the things which are told us of the Lord:" they are told of Him who is "the faithful and true witness"—of Him of whom it is said to be impossible that He should lie. They are the words of Him who is infinitely wise, and cannot be deceived; and who is infinitely true, and, therefore, cannot deceive. I would speak it with reverence, and as in the presence of God; it would be more easy for God to be deceived than to deceive. A man can be deceived, and there be no shade on his moral character; it is only a defect in his mental capacity; a person may be too many for him; but let a man deceive, and there is an awful shade on his character at once. But, my dear friends, you need not fear that there will ever be found any such shade on the shine of God's character and glory: he cannot—not only be deceived, but He cannot deceive. "Faithful is He that hath promised"—this you may put to all God has said—"who also will do it."

3. Then, you know, confidence between man and man runs parallel, not only to his wisdom and veracity, but to our conviction of *his ability*.

We may believe, that what God says He is able to perform; that He is so wise He cannot err, and so faithful that He cannot deceive you; and that He is abundantly able to *do* what He has promised. A servant, you know, can engage with his master for the year with the greatest confidence; and if you ask the

servant, "Did you get a written agreement with your master?" "O no; no such thing." "Then you did not book-swear him, did you?" "No, to be sure not: do you think I was going to insult the gentleman, and swear him by the book?" "Do you think he will pay you your wage, then?" "I have no doubt about it: with respect to his riches, they are unsearchable; he is able to pay my wage, and a hundred thousand such wages as mine." He takes him at his word, and says, "Yes, Sir, I will serve you according to the conviction I have of your *ability*;" and he knows that he is able to pay him. So let your confidence be in the promise of God, what He has "told us of the Lord," bear some proportion to his ability; and we shall then ask in faith, nothing doubting.

Look at St. Paul, with his view of the ability of God: he prays that God would grant to the church "to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man; that Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and depth, and length, and height; and to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God." When we hear such a petition as this, we are almost ready to exclaim with Festus, "Paul, much religion has made thee mad." How is it likely, Paul, that a man here in this world can be "rooted and grounded in love," and that "Christ may dwell in his heart by faith," and that he may be "strengthened with might by the Spirit in the inner man?" How is it likely, Paul, that he can "know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge," and be "filled with all the fulness of God?" Paul's intellect must be affected! But if he is mad, he is determined to be more so; for he concludes, "Now unto Him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all

that we can ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us, unto Him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end." After all his petitions, he is looking at the boundless fulness of the grace which is in Christ Jesus ; and he says He is able to do as much as he has been asking—that He can do more than he can ask or even think.

4. Then, again, confidence between man and man is also proportioned to our conviction of his *willingness*.

He delights to do it ; He is not merely able and willing, but He delights to do what He promises ; his word is his bond—not merely as it regards his word and his faithfulness, but He has a greater delight to fulfil his word than he has to whom it is fulfilled. When the Apostle prays for the Thessalonians, he urges three things particularly : he says, "Rejoice evermore—Pray without ceasing—In every thing give thanks." I sometimes think, that if we had any sectarian peculiarity, I should like it to be this. If a foreigner was to come over to England, and say, "I understand there is a very numerous sect, (the Lord grant that it may be increasing, and widening, and deepening too !) called the Wesleyans : now all sects have some peculiarity about them—pray what is the peculiarity of these Wesleyans ?" I should like this answer to be invariably given : "Why, Sir, they are an odd sort of people, and they have these peculiarities about them ; they 'rejoice evermore,' they 'pray without ceasing,' and 'in everything' they 'give thanks.' " The blush should cover our faces that this is not our peculiarity ; because it is the will of God : "Faithful is He that hath called you, who also will do it." And, therefore, if we do not "rejoice evermore"—if we do not "pray without ceasing"—if we do not "in everything give thanks," we are criminal in the sight of God ; we are living below our

glory: for it is "the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning us."

IV. See, then, faith *In the Propriety of its Acts*.

Look at the actings of faith under Divine influence. As the actings of faith are actings upon the soul, you know it is very common to express the actions of the soul by the actions of the body. One of the acts of faith is a clear and deep apprehension of its object. The actings of faith are compared to the actings of the *eye*. "*Look* unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth." "As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up; that whosoever believeth on him"—*looks* at him, just as the persons who were bitten by the serpents in the wilderness looked at the brazen serpent, and were healed—"might not perish, but have everlasting life." So, here, the actings of faith are compared to looking: it is the sinner apprehending. And can we have any subjects of equal importance, to recommend them to our understanding, as the objects of faith? They are not merely objects which are true, which are "told us of the Lord;" they are objects in which we have personal concern; my own salvation, or my own ruin, depends upon my believing them or not. Where can you find such objects to arrest the attention of man, as man himself and man's Saviour, Jesus Christ, and the salvation of the soul both in time and eternity?

The acting of faith is sometimes compared to that of the *heart*. "With the heart man believeth to righteousness." It is the soul not merely apprehending, but cordially approving. A mere apprehension won't do; because all know what it is to do good, and do it not. There may be hundreds or thousands in this congregation—hundreds, however—who may say they have an apprehension in the mind, but there is no cordial reception in the heart. Do

your hearts go with your convictions? That is the point. Do your hearts feel your conviction of your own guilt, and helplessness, and ruin? When you look at Jesus Christ as the all-sufficient Saviour of the world, do your hearts feel the application of that salvation in the regeneration of your souls, and the adoption of your persons? One grand act of piety is not merely simple apprehension; it is cordial approbation.

Then there must be personal application and appropriation; and the actings of faith are compared to the actings of the *hand*—appropriating, laying hold. The salvation of the gospel is compared to a feast, you know—the feast of a king. Well, persons are invited to the feast; they come to the feast, and sit down at the table. Well, they sit at the table, they admire all the arrangements, and they give you a lecture on every dish at the table: but then, if you went no further than this, they would be famished in the very presence of the feast. Our Lord says of his salvation what he said when he gave the sacramental bread—“Take, and eat.” So the salvation of the gospel is compared to a feast; it is not a man merely accepting the invitation, sitting at the table, and giving a disquisition on the peculiar process of every dish; it is not merely approving of them and recommending them; he may go as far as this, and be famished after all. He must take and eat, or his knowledge will be at least useless. So, my dear friends, “blessed is she that believeth.” Hence the Virgin said, when the revelation was made to her, “Behold the handmaid of the Lord; be it unto me (here is appropriation) according to thy word.”

I believe this is the reason why many a honest-hearted man lives in bondage when he might live in liberty—why he lives in twilight when he might live in daylight. Why, I know that many of you, if we were to ask you to steal,

or to cheat, or to break the Sabbath, or to commit sin in any way palpably and openly—why you would sooner die first; and yet you do not live in the light of God's countenance; and the reason is, because you do not appropriate; you receive Jesus Christ as *the* Saviour, but you do not claim him as *your* Saviour. You sit at the feast, and sit at the table, and there is the King of kings at the head of it, and he has procured a feast of fat things; and there you sit starving to death, and you say, "O, I doubt it is presumption." Take, and eat; appropriate; it is yours. God in Christ is made unto you wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption; and you sit at the feast, and famish, with a false humility, starving to death in the presence of your King; and you say, "I doubt it is presumption—I doubt it is presumption—I doubt it is presumption, to say, *My* wisdom, *my* righteousness, *my* sanctification, *my* redemption; be it unto *me* even as thou wilt." Do not you see the fallacy of such reasoning? What would a king say, if he were to ask you to a feast, and set before them the dishes which they want, and they were to sit with the dishes before them, and say, "May it please your majesty, I doubt it is presumption to taste of your bounty?" The king would think there was something defective in your intellect, or you would not so insult his liberality in providing for you. So, Jesus Christ has brought you perfect salvation: it is all within your reach; and that pardon has been presented again and again and again; and you have been urged to believe; you have apprehended, you have approved, but you do not appropriate. Will you appropriate it *now*? You are a sinner, and Christ is a Saviour; He came to save sinners, and, therefore, He came to save you. God so loved the world, that who-

soever believeth, whosoever appropriateth his salvation, should have everlasting life. The Lord grant that you may come out of yourselves, and seek, and appropriate, and apply the blood-bought salvation of God! The testimony of God, wherever it is savingly received, influences the conduct. As soon as Noah believed, he built an ark; as soon as Abraham believed, he left his father's house; as soon as ever he took God at his word, he went forth with his son to Mount Moriah: as soon as ever Paul believed the testimony of God, he renounced his own righteousness, and counted all things but dung that he might win Christ. Wherever there is saving faith, there must be, in the nature of things, practical manifestation. If a man were to stand up at a love-feast, and tell me that he loved God with all his heart, that he had manifestations of God greater even than were manifested to an archangel—if there was not a practical manifestation of that in his conduct, I would say, he is deceiving himself, or the enemy is deceiving him. Faith, you know, without works is dead. If I told a man that by following such and such a road he would be sure to be robbed and murdered, what signifies his saying to me, "I believe it," if he still goes on in that way? A man may say what he pleases, and preach what he pleases—unless we have a practical manifestation of it, he is deceiving his own soul.

V. Then consider faith *In the Benefits of its Exercise.*

"Blessed is she that believeth; for there shall be a performance." God is faithful, and, therefore, He only wants the application of our faith. The promises of God are all yea and amen to him that believeth. Therefore, here is the Amen; here is the True Witness; here is all that Infinite Wisdom, and love, and truth, and ability have provided for you; and it is all yours by believing.

"Blessed is she that believeth; for there shall be a

performance"—and only a performance when we believe. There is a connection in the order of God, between the salvation purchased and promised, and the sinner's enjoyment of it; and there is a divine grace given to the sinner, and that divine grace, in the application of it to the conscience, brings the Saviour and the sinner together. Faith always honours God: that is the peculiarity of faith. If there be a clinging to self, it is not right saving faith: but faith always comes out of itself, and believes the testimony of God; and, therefore, as it believes the testimony of God, it puts the whole honour on God; it puts the whole crown on his head; and as it comes out of itself, and crowns the Lord, therefore the Lord crowns it. "He that believeth shall be saved:" "there shall be a performance."

Now, sinners, let us apply this. Will you believe God's testimony concerning himself? Unpardoned, unconverted sinner, will you take God at his word? You will take a child at his word, and you will act upon it: will you not take God at his word? If you were in a field at a distance from home, and a child in button-clothes came—run, run, run, and said, your house, or your shop, or your warehouse is on fire! you would take the child at his word, and would make the utmost speed—would'nt you—to put the fire out, and save your property? Now, will you take a *child* at his word, and not take God at his word? There you are, going in the high road to perdition, leading to the wilderness of hell; and there you will soon drop into a pit, and be robbed and murdered to all eternity. Sinner, will you take God at his word? Stop! sinner, stop! You are an undone man; and, therefore, take God at his word. As Noah took God at his word, and prepared an ark, in which he was saved, so there is an ark prepared for you. There is a deluge of fire

and brimstone to be rained upon your houses ; but you may get into the ark which is prepared, and God will shut you in in safety. Will you take God at his word, and escape for your life, and not look behind ? Mothers, you will take a child at his word. If your infant had crawled to the side of the river, and dropped in, and a child came to you, run, run, run, and said, the child is dropt into the river ! you would fly with wings to your feet to get your child out of the river : would not you take the child at his word ? You are guilty ; you are in danger : you will be lost—you will be lost for ever ! you are just on the brink of the river ; thanks be to God you have not fallen in ; but unless you take God at his word, and start from ruin's brink, you will fall in. Chief of sinners ! will you believe "the things which are told you of the Lord ?" You may say, "O, you don't know what a sinner I am." No, I don't. "You don't know the magnitude of my sins." No, I don't. "You don't know whether there is any mercy for me : I doubt whether the day of grace is not past ; I am afraid I have committed the unpardonable sin : there is no mercy for me." Will you take God at his word ? Will you believe "the things that are told you of the Lord ?" "Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts : and let him return to the Lord, and He will have mercy upon him ; and to our God, for He will abundantly pardon." Believest thou this ? We preach the Lord Jesus Christ ; and we say that through Him there is mercy for the chief of sinners, for the vilest of the vile ; whosoever believeth in Him shall receive the remission of sins. Have I here the greatest sinner that ever breathed the air of London ? Are all the sins of a whole million and a half of the population met in this man ? I exhibit the Lord Jesus Christ, and I tell you his blood can cleanse from *all* sin ;

there is more merit in his death than there is demerit in your crimes. Therefore, let that most wicked of all wicked men, and that most unrighteous of all unrighteous men, return to the Lord, and He will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for He will abundantly pardon him. His ways are not as your ways, and his thoughts are not as your thoughts. For as the heavens are high above the earth—and do you know how high they are? It has never been found by telescopes of the most magnifying character: we do not know how high the fixed stars are, and we do not know how many thousands of millions of miles there are beyond them—but as high as the heavens are above the earth, says God, “so are My ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts.”

“Ah!” says one, “but you do not know how hard my heart is; it is as hard as a stone. I weep because I cannot weep; I mourn because I cannot mourn: if I could weep there would be some hope. You do not know what a hard heart there is in my bosom!” No, I do not; but there are “things that are told you of the Lord.” “What! is there any thing told of *me*?” Yes; will you believe it? “I will take away the heart of stone, and I will give a heart of flesh; I will sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean: I will write my name on that rock.” Will you believe “the things that are told you of the Lord?” Believe it, and plead it in faith; and your heart of stone shall be turned into a heart of flesh.

Then another says, “Ah! you do not know what a poor creature I am, or you would rather sympathize with me than blame me. I am a poor weak creature, always poring over my weakness; and my graces are so weak that I do not know whether I have any grace at all sometimes.” Will you believe “the things that are told

you of the Lord?" "What! has the Lord told anything of such an unworthy creature as I am?" Yes; He has said "The bruised reed I will not break; the smoking flax I will not quench; till I send forth judgment unto victory." Will you believe it? There is the smoking flax, just a little spark of grace; there it is, and the smoke gets into your eyes, and your eyes smart, and there are your poor blood-shot eyes; will you believe "the things that are told you of the Lord?" O! believe it, and there shall surely be a performance.

Thus, you see that all depends on the credit which is given to "the things that are told us of the Lord." "He that believeth shall be saved; he shall not come into condemnation. He that believeth not is condemned already: he that believeth not shall be damned."

I leave these observations for your serious consideration. All depends on the exercise of faith. Whenever you come to God, come without doubting. "If any man lack wisdom, let him ask it of God, who giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not." Let him "ask in faith, nothing doubting." And why should you not? Why should you not credit the testimony of God? Why should you doubt at all, when you are pleading the divine promises that the Lord will fulfil them? Why should we not believe that He will justify that poor sinner? Why should we not believe that we can "know the love of Christ which passeth knowledge?" Why should we not believe that we can be "filled with all the fulness of God?" Why should we not believe that we can be "sanctified, body, soul, and spirit?" Why should we not believe that we can be "preserved blameless till the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ?" They are some of "the things that are told us of the Lord;" and if we believe them there shall be a performance of them.

SERMON IX.

THE ABUNDANT ENTRANCE INTO THE EVERLASTING KINGDOM OF OUR LORD AND SAVIOUR JESUS CHRIST.

“Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall: for so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.”
—2 PETER i. 10, 11.

It is a common saying (and common sayings deserve attention, because they contain much in little, and are the effects of long experience,) that circumstances alter cases. Circumstances certainly do alter cases materially, for a sentence spoken in some circumstances may be of trivial importance, and the same sentence spoken in other circumstances may have peculiar weight. For instance, when a pious and judicious father speaks at anytime, in the character of father, to his son, he always deserves attention; but, at the same time, there may be circumstances, in which he may make observations, which deserve double attention. When that pious and judicious father is dying, and he knows he is dying, then surely every sentence that he speaks to his child acquires a weight which I cannot find language to describe. Every sentence, as though it were gold filings, should be swept up, and not a particle lost; every word should be remembered, and treasured up in the heart. Be assured, when that pious and judicious father is dying, if there is more importance to be attached to one duty than another, he will, with his dying breath, urge it. If there is any

danger to which he discovers his child to be peculiarly exposed, he will then give a warning, with the sanction of his dying breath. If there is any benefit which he wishes his child to possess, he will then recommend it, with the language and emphasis of death. So that the circumstance of a pious and judicious father dying—he himself knowing that he was dying,—would give peculiar emphasis to his remarks.

When we look at the circumstances in which Peter wrote this Epistle—and he wrote it, if you will allow me to say so, with his coffin-lid for a writing-desk, for he was just on the brink of the grave—when we consider that an inspired apostle was writing his last letter, for anything we know, he knowing it to be his last letter; if there was one subject which was more important than another, he would surely write it now. And this is not mere imagination; for if you look at the verses following my text, it is evident that he was writing under this impression, and his great and inspired soul was struggling for language, that he might leave something worthy of attention and remembrance. “Wherefore,” says he, “I will not be negligent to put you always in remembrance of these things, though ye know them, and be established in the present truth. Yea, I think it is meet, as long as I am in this tabernacle, to stir you up by putting you in remembrance; knowing that shortly I must put off this tabernacle, even as our Lord Jesus Christ hath showed me. Moreover, I will endeavour”—I will try, I will collect all the powers of my mind—“I will endeavour that ye may be able, after my decease, to have these things always in remembrance. I am on the verge of eternity; I will sit down, and endeavour to write something which you may have always in remem-

brance, after my decease, and never remember without great profit."

What, then, are the things which he would have us remember particularly?

I believe my text tells us: "Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if ye do these things ye shall never fall; for so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ."

O! my Lord, as thy servant Peter sat down to endeavour to write something which might always be remembered with pleasure and profit, so let thy dust and ashes say something that every individual in this congregation may remember, when this head is laid in the dust, and this skull without a tongue!

What, then, are the things which he would have them always keep in remembrance after his decease? The *first* is, The glorious state of a Christian in eternity: it is called "the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ." The *second* is, The grand work of a Christian in time, "to make his calling and election sure:" this is fair work for eternity. The *third* is, That he would have them do that work. In what manner is it to be done? "Give diligence;" or, as our Divines generally render it, "all diligence." The *last* is, The mighty motives which urged them to this duty, and supported them under it: "if ye do these things ye shall never fall; for so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ."

I. The first thing the apostle would have them keep in remembrance, is *The glorious State of a Christian in Eternity.*

The state of a Christian in eternity is so glorious, that you see the apostle borrows the figure of a kingdom—"the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ." We are children in our generation; and, therefore, knowing that a kingdom is a very sounding thing in our baby imaginations, he is forced to stoop to our capacity, and represent the glory of heaven as "the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ."

My dear friends, you know the general property of this kingdom is this,—every person will be an inhabitant of this kingdom, and a subject of it for ever and ever. There is this peculiar property in the kingdom of Christ—there is an absence of every natural or moral evil. There is in that kingdom, an absence of all evil, and danger, and fear; there is no sorrow, no suffering, no pain, no evil of any kind. Another property of the kingdom is, that there is the presence of good; the presence of good exactly suited to our nature and feelings; the presence of good which satisfies, and fills, and enlarges. And an inhabitant of this kingdom is not merely at an everlasting distance from all evil, but in the everlasting possession of pure, and perfect, and growing, and everlasting good. This kingdom, therefore, is a kingdom of perfect enjoyment. Its general description is, the absence of all fear, felt or suffered, and the presence of all good increasing for ever.

It is called "the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ." Why is it called by that name? Why is the glorious state of a Christian in eternity, called not merely a kingdom, but "the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ?" We may assign a few reasons.

1. And one reason why the glorious state of a

Christian, either in time or eternity—in one case the kingdom of *grace*, and in the other the kingdom of *glory*—is called “the kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ,” is, that it is *the purchase of his blood*; it is a purchased possession.

Under the Jewish economy, when a man had fallen poor, and was obliged to part with his inheritance, it was not suffered to go out of the family, his next of kin must purchase it; and then at the jubilee it returned to the family; so that the inheritance did not go out of the family. Our poor father lost his inheritance; lost the inheritance of God's favour, God's image, and God's heaven. Then who was to purchase it? There was nobody of kin to purchase it. An angel could not purchase it, because he could not be next of kin; he did not participate in nature. An archangel could not purchase it, because he could not be next of kin. But such was the boundless love of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, rather than we should lose our inheritance, He said, “I will be next of kin;” and He came and assumed our nature, flesh of our flesh, and bone of our bone, that He might be next of kin, (or as an old divine says,) “that He might be our own brother by the mother's side:” and thus He purchased the inheritance. He, therefore, in our nature, fulfilled all righteousness; laid down the purchase money; and, blessed be God, the kingdom is ours; it is a purchased possession.

2. Then this kingdom may very properly be called “the kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ,” because it is the *work of his hands*.

“I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go to prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself.” The excellencies of heaven we shall fully comprehend when we get there; it is “a building.

of God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens." We are sure that heaven must be as glorious and excellent as Infinite Wisdom can devise, and as infinite power can execute, and as infinite love can give to bless. It is the work of his hands; and, consequently, it may be called "the kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ," because it is the seat of his glory; it is the moral manifestation of the divine presence, and the presence of that glory wherever we turn our eyes! Yes; we shall see the glory of Christ; everything in heaven will be a mirror, and we shall see in them the beauty, the glory, and the excellency of Jesus Christ: "Father, I will that they also, whom Thou hast given me, be where I am, that they may behold my glory." Consequently, we shall see the glory of Jesus, in the "city without foundations," and in the "house not made with hands."

This kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, is like no other kingdom, because *every subject, every inhabitant of this kingdom is a king and a priest*. There they sit, kings and priests; and there Jesus sits in the centre, the King of kings. When we look, therefore, at the palace where those kings reside, and the temple where those priests worship, we may see the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ. And in describing the excellence of heaven, you know, the Holy Ghost sets before men whatever is precious in their estimation, to give a poor imperfect shadow of the place where Christ's kings reign, and where Christ's priests worship.

Then, we see the glory of Jesus, in *the excellency of the inhabitants of this kingdom*. After all, it is the inhabitants of a place that make a place comfortable. Suppose I have the most magnificent palace that sun ever shone upon, proportionably finished, and proportionably furnished, and in that palace I am in the centre of thieves

and robbers, and cannot sleep at night, what signifies my fine palace? No! let me have a cottage in a row of cottages; on one side a child of God singing the praises of God, and on the other one that loves and serves God; so that we can meet together, and love, and sing, and praise God together—let me have a cottage in such a row of cottages, rather than a palace in the midst of robbers! So that, we shall see the glory of Jesus in the beauty of the inhabitants.

3. We shall see then, what we do not understand now, *the nature, the office, the order, and the actions of angels*. It is very little we know of them now, except that they are ministering spirits. When we are kings in this kingdom, and priests in this temple; oh! how will our happiness be perpetually increased, when we see angels coming down to this lower world, carrying back perpetually message after message, and we hear them say, "A sinner saved! *A sinner saved!* A SINNER SAVED! Yonder, at such a place, is a sinner weeping, mourning, and turning to God." Then shall we hear the song of angels in the kingdom of our Redeemer, rejoicing in the multiplying of his subjects; and that will increase our joy. I hope that the angel that is now hovering over us may have to carry the news of increased heavenly joy just now; that some poor weeping sinner may turn his heart from sin to God. And then Jesus looks with the eye of intelligence, and He says to a father, "It is thy child that is weeping!" and to a mother, "It is thy child that is weeping!" How will your poor mothers and fathers rejoice, if the angel carries from this congregation the saying, "A sinner saved! A sinner saved! A sinner saved!" And Jesus looks, in intelligence and happiness, to the soul of the glorified parent, and says, "It is thy child." May the Lord grant it!

And how our happiness must be increased, when we see these angels going and attending the death-beds of the people of God! for every moment they are bringing some happy spirit, and presenting it before God. There is first one coming, and then another, who have escaped under the evils of time, and have now got to the happiness of the kingdom of God; the number is perpetually increasing; the chorus is perpetually swelling; every moment there is a new arrival; so that the chorus becomes louder, and louder, and louder. May we have an entrance into this everlasting kingdom!

4. We see the glory of "the kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ," in the act of *his own exaltation*.

We see the glory of this King among kings, and this blessed High Priest among his priests. We see the heights of his exaltation, contrasted with the depth of his humiliation; so that we shall say, "How great and glorious!" Is that He who slept in a manger? It is. Is that He who waded through a sea of blood, to snatch a ruined world from sinking into hell? It is. Is that He who was wounded for my transgressions, bruised for my iniquities, chastised for my peace? It is. Look at the print of the nails in his hands and feet—they are all suns now; and every point where the thorns stabbed his head, is a sparkling star! You see, then, by the suns shining in his hands and sides, and the stars sparkling round his forehead, when He was crucified for me, when He was crowned with thorns for me, when He died for me—that is He! exalted above all exaltation, and all things being subject to Him. Oh, then, when we see Jesus, we see the sun of heaven's glory!

"Bright like the sun the Saviour sits,
And spreads eternal noon;
No evening there, no gloomy nights,
To want the feeble moon."

There we see the glory of Jesus in his office, in his actions, in his exaltation, in the light of heaven, in the strength of the eye that can bear the sight ; and we shall look, and gaze, and wonder, and love, and praise God to all eternity. May God grant my brethren and myself a share !

These are some of the reasons why this kingdom is called "the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ."

5. But there are other peculiarities in this kingdom. There are peculiar privileges, which the inhabitants, and kings, and priests, and subjects of this kingdom enjoy.

One of these privileges is this ; *Whatever we see increases our happiness ; not only from its own excellency, but it increases our happiness because it is MINE.* "He that overcometh shall inherit all things." Of everything in heaven he is the inheritor. Even in time, in a state of grace, we can say to a Christian, "All are yours." And if all are yours in a state of grace, in your present circumstances, surely, when you get to glory, we can say, "All are yours." Here, then, my friends, is everything that can possibly make us happy, in the increasing excellency of the object ; and then, that excellency is mine !

There is another thing which will finish heaven's happiness ; and that is, that not only every object is calculated to make me happy, and it is mine, but *is mine for ever.* It is not only "the kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ," but it is "the *everlasting* kingdom ;" it is mine—mine for ever ! I once read of a miser in King Charles the Second's days, whose bags of gold were the god he worshipped. He would sometimes spread his bags of gold upon the centre of a table, and go into one of the corners of the room to look at it. till

his poor heart kindled with feeling, and then he used to run and grasp the old bags, and say, "They are all mine!" "Yes, but they will not be yours long, sir." Blessed be God, whatever we see of the infinite riches of heaven, when we get there, we can grasp them, and say, "They are all mine, and mine for ever!" It is "the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ."

Here, then, you have a short shadowy figure of the glorious state of the Christian in eternity.

II. We come now to *the grand work of a Christian in time.*

What is that? To make sure for eternity; to make his own personal salvation sure; to make his calling and election sure. Every creature is sincerely called of God; and, therefore, every one who obeys the call is chosen of God. You can all make your election sure: for, when God calls, he means that you should obey the call, and be chosen. Turn not, then, a deaf ear to God's call. When the armies were seen in heaven, there was this peculiarity concerning them—they were called "the faithful and chosen."

1. My dear friends, to make sure work for heaven, we must get a *clear title to heaven.*

We have forfeited all right to heaven. But our Lord Jesus Christ has bought, as I said before, our inheritance; and through Jesus, a poor sinner, who is an heir of hell, may be made an "heir of God, and joint-heir with Jesus Christ." Although you are heirs of hell, you see that you may get a title to heaven. Listen to the sincere call of God, and you shall get a title to it. How? By receiving Jesus Christ into your hearts. He bought our title, and He must give it, and He alone: "As many as received Him, to them gave He power to be made the sons of

God." And the apostle says, "If children, then heirs, heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ;" but only "*if children.*"

We must be *children*, then, to be made *heirs*. To make our "calling and election sure," we must become one of the "little flock." "Little flock, it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom." Jesus Christ bought this title at the price of his own blood. And, blessed be God, He did not buy this title merely for one person and not another; He laid down his blood for all; therefore, if we do not personally and universally obtain this title, the fault is not in the blood that was shed for it, but in us that despise the blood.

2. Again: in order that we may make our calling and election sure, we must get *a personal meetness for heaven*; not merely a title.

Is it possible, in human cases, for a man to have a title to an estate and not a fitness for it? he may be an idiot or a maniac. In order that we may enjoy the glorious state of a christian in eternity, we must be made fit for it. You have read what the king says, and He cannot be mistaken: "Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." Therefore, we must not merely have a title to it, by justification and the pardon of our sins; but we must have a meetness for it, by the sanctifying influences of the Spirit of God being shed abroad in our hearts, by the Holy Ghost given to us.

There is a most awful soul-ruining mistake in the world. Persons live for years and years, slaves to sin, and drudges to the world; and within a few years of their death they begin to pray, and send for persons to pray for them; and when they die, we say, "we hope they are gone to

heaven." Here is a man who is buried in the world, morning, noon, and night; and then, just at the close of life, he prays. What would a man do with heaven, think you, after praying for it just at the end of his days, when he had never before loved God or served Him? I can only say, I must leave that to the will of God. You resist the Spirit of God, and yet you hope to get to heaven by praying a little before you die! May the Lord have mercy upon you! Before you can enjoy heaven, there must be a meetness for it—a capacity for enjoying heaven.

I suppose the majority of my congregation find it very cumbersome to be in company with a set of religious people. You are as uneasy in the company of religious people, and more so, than you would be in the company of a corpse. If you cannot enjoy the company of religious people, and religious exercise, let me ask, what would you do in heaven? Sabbath-breaker! what will you do in heaven, where God is adored and praised for ever and ever? If you go there, what will you do? You would be miserable! Therefore, my friends, before you and I can obtain an entrance into the kingdom, we must not only have a title to it by justification, but we must have a meetness for it—we must be "born again." Let not the enemy of souls deceive you. Think not that you can go to heaven without being "born again." The Lord save you!

III. *How must we do this Work?*

1. Here is the grand work—all you are to do is to enter into that work with all your hearts—"Give diligence."

You listen to your minister's voice; and he calls upon you to exercise your given power, and improve your given opportunity. When God says "Give diligence," He clothes his word with the energy of his Spirit; and He

never imposes a commandment without offering help to perform it. Exercise, then, your given power, and improve your given opportunity, *in removing impediments*. A title to heaven we must have, by an interest in the merits of Jesus Christ personally. A man has no title, and no meetness for heaven, while he lives in sin. And you yourselves know, that however you may wish and hope to go to heaven, (and who does not?) wishing and hoping are both in vain unless sin is renounced and repented of. Love sin, and there is no heaven for you. You have no title to heaven, no meetness for heaven, if sin is loved. Be diligent. In the Divine power of God, renounce sin. "Let the wicked man forsake his ways, and the unrighteous man his thoughts." "Cease to do evil; learn to do well."

2. Again: exercise your given power, and improve your given opportunity, *in an immediate application to the Blood of the Lamb*.

If we would obtain a title to heaven, we can only get it by faith in the merits of Christ. We are the children of God; and if children at all, it is by faith in the Lord Jesus. The reason why even professors of religion, and members of the church, do not walk clearly in the light, is because there is not strong, and bold, and constant acting faith. If believers did but come out of themselves more, and live by more intimate acts of faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, we should always be able to

"Read our titles clear
To mansions in the sky."

And if there be any obscurity in your title, you may trace it to its cause; and it is that sin is not entirely and wholly abandoned, or (which I suppose is more generally the case) there is not a living, constant, acting faith in Jesus Christ.

3. And, then, we must *yield to the influence of the Holy Spirit*; for without that we can do nothing.

The Spirit of the Lord will lead us from sin; and the Spirit of Jesus will lead us to Christ; and the Spirit itself will manifest itself to us. We shall make our "calling and election sure;" because, under the influence of the Spirit, we shall be led to the feet of Jesus, and obtain the salvation of God: "The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God: and if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ."

IV. *The Motives to engage us in the Work, and support us under it.* "If ye do these things, ye shall never fall; for so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ."

1. The all-important ground of this duty, and the all-important argument to engage us in this duty, is *eternity!*

If you will allow me to say so, in the scale to cast our judgment, there is the weight of two eternities, and the voice of two eternities; or, rather, two opposite states in one eternity. They have a voice, and speak in language such as no human being can ever utter, "Give diligence." O, the torments of hell! we do not know how diversified, or great, they may be. There is an eternity there; and we are going to an eternity—either heaven or hell. My brethren, all the torments of hell, whatever be their nature, whatever may be their diversity, whatever may be their extremity—all these have a voice. Do you not hear their roaring thunders reverberating, to prevent your going there, and saying, "Make your calling and election sure; and then not a flame shall touch your souls; you shall not come to this place of torment?" All the joys

of this everlasting kingdom, be they what they may—all the dignities, and honours, and privileges, and glories, and happiness, be they what they may—of “the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ”—every voice, (and there are millions of them,) every voice says, “Give diligence, and this heaven is your own; give diligence, and this glory is yours for ever!” It is an eternal hell which we wish you to avoid; and an eternal heaven which we wish you to possess. The deeps of the depths of hell, and the heights of the heights of glory, all say, though in different tones, “Give diligence!”

2. Another argument is, *the inestimable privileges in life.*

What are the inestimable privileges in life? Absolute security from apostacy. Give diligence, and you shall “never fall.” Can a man give diligence and fall? I am very certain that the sun would sooner fall out of the firmament, than such a man fall. A diligent man fall! No! let earth and hell be united, they cannot conquer him. A christian will never fall till he ceases to give diligence. And every backslider in this place, if he will but give diligence, may obtain his title and his meetness also. May the Lord bless him! Although he is a disinherited man, his inheritance can be given back to him. If he will but give diligence, there is absolute security from apostacy. A diligent soul fall! Although a thousand hells conspire against him, he cannot fall. He walks with Christ in life, and cannot fall. He avoids all the evil of backsliding from God; and instead of the poor sinner falling into hell, he avoids all apostacy.

Here is an argument, my friends; give diligence, and you shall never fall. If God can keep you, you are kept. If infinite wisdom, infinite power, and infinite love can

keep you, you stand immovably fixed, and earth, and hell, and sin, cannot conquer you !

3. Then, my friends, there is *present happiness* in making our calling and election sure.

“When I can read my title clear
To mansions in the skies,
I'll bid farewell to every fear,
And wipe my weeping eyes.”

Can a poor man in this congregation, by giving diligence, get a title to £10,000 a year ? The lawyer whom he went to said, “There is no doubt, if you ‘*give diligence*’ you will get a title.” The man would believe it; he would go from register to register, in order that he might get a title; and perhaps you met him one day, and said, “Well, you seem very anxious about this matter.” “The lawyers,” he says to you, “say that if I pay proper attention, I can get a title.” “I thought you seemed as if you laid it to heart; for your skin almost cleaves to your bones.” He would say, “Yes; I cannot sleep at night for it; and I am very anxious in the day-time.” “If you have such a fair prospect of a title, you should take encouragement.” “Ah!” says he, “you don’t know my case. If I get a title I get £10,000 a year; but I am sadly in debt; there is a copy of a writ out against me; and if I do not get a title, I shall be cast into prison.” Now, do you think such a man’s anxiety would not be justifiable? Then, after a time, he, by diligence, gets a clear title to the estate. What does that poor man feel? He says to his wife and family, “Farewell rags! farewell cottage! farewell poverty! I can pay my debts! I can smile at the sheriff’s officer, and say to him, ‘Good morning, sir;’ and I shall not go to prison now!” O, bless the Lord! Although you and I owe ten thousand talents, and have nothing to pay with, and

a copy of a writ is out of heaven against us, yet we have got a title, not to £10,000, but to an inheritance incorruptible. And thus, when I get my debts paid, my sins pardoned, and a title to glory, judge what my happiness will be! "Give diligence," and you shall have it!

4. There are, therefore, inestimable privileges in life; and there are *inestimable advantages in death*. "For so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ."

Being bred in an inland part of the country, I have often been a little mortified at not being able to enter into the peculiar interest that appears at a sea-port when a poor vessel that had long been thought lost comes in sight. Suppose, as well as a long voyage, this vessel had been out upon an important matter, loaded with gold and silver, and precious stones—a vessel liable to be wrecked and stranded, by sand-banks and whirlpools; and it was feared this poor vessel, the company, and the crew, had been lost: at last, the news arrives that she is coming into harbour. The poor sailors, burnt and bleached, are folding up the sails; the sun shines, and a mild swell just brings her into port. The persons on the shore cry out, "She is coming! *she is coming!* SHE IS COMING!" and the sailors hail them with their caps from the vessel. "Ah," says the mother, "There is my son: he is coming!" And the sisters say, "There is my brother; he is coming!" And the vessel comes into port nobly and finely, laden with gold, and silver, and precious stones; they stop the vessel, and are hailed by hundreds on the strand. You shall have such an entrance as this. Be diligent!

My fellow-voyagers for eternity, let us be diligent; we are laden with gold, and silver, and precious stones that will live for ever. Thanks be to God! we can all go

safely through our voyage; for we have Christ for our pilot; and if we give diligence, we are secure. Give diligence, then, ye voyagers to eternity! There is not a rock to split you, not a sand-bank to wreck you, not a whirlpool to bring you down. Oh, what joy there shall be when the poor crazy vessel comes into port! There is salvation waiting for us: and there are angels singing, in the golden streets of the New Jerusalem; and there we enter "the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ."

"There all the ship's company meet
Who sailed with the Saviour beneath;
With shoutings each other they greet,
And triumph o'er sorrow and death.

The voyage of life's at an end,
The mortal affliction is past;
The age that in heaven they spend,
For ever and ever shall last."

Be diligent, then, my friends, and a triumphant "entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly, into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ."

"Oh that we may triumph so,
When the storm of life is past;
And, dying, find our latest foe
Under our feet at last!"

Then, as the Apostle Peter says, he desired to write something that should always be in remembrance, and remembered with profit and pleasure; so I desire that what I have said, in the presence of God, you may always have in remembrance. May you remember the glorious state of a christian in eternity; may you remember the grand work of a christian in time; may you remember the manner in which he is to do it, and the motives;

and in this remembrance, may you go on from strength to strength, from glory to glory, from liberty to liberty, that every step may bring you nearer heaven, and that every step may make you more happy! Amen! Amen!

SERMON X.

THE WORK ASSIGNED TO MAN.

“I must work the works of Him that sent me, while it is day : the night cometh, when no man can work.—JOHN ix. 4.

THESE are the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, in reference to his mediatorial undertaking. He had such a view of the great importance and difficulty of that work, and the consequences which depended upon its performance, that the language which He uses here is uncommonly applicable: “I must work the works of Him that hath sent me, while it is day : the night cometh, when no man can work.” In the work which our Lord had to do, He had to reconcile the Divine attributes, that God might be glorified whilst man was saved—a work which none but He could accomplish: He had the law to magnify and make honourable; He had his enemies, and those of his people, to conquer; the kingdom of Satan to overturn, and the new and living way to open up to the holiest by his blood. Consequently, the work which He had to perform was a work which none but He could do; and if the work was undone, the world must have been undone. The salvation of a ruined world depended on his doing the work or leaving it undone—and He knew the value of immortal souls—the salvation of millions was suspended in the performance of that mediatorial work on which He was engaged. It was no wonder, then, that He adopted the language of the text. If ever there was a work in the world that deserved the name of a *must-be*,

it was emphatically this work of Christ—by which the sinner was to be saved, the enemy of souls routed, and God glorified in all. The words of the text, then, when spoken of our Divine Redeemer, are peculiarly appropriate to his character, office, and the issue of that great mediatorial undertaking in which He was engaged; and He never ceased to do that great work until He exclaimed in triumph on the cross, “It is finished!”

My dear friends, I think you and I may lay our hands on our own hearts, and, in a humble degree, we may adopt the language of the text with the strictest propriety—and, if we have not done it, it is time we did it to-night. I, personally, I, myself, must “work the works of Him that sent me, while it is day: the night cometh, when no man can work.” You know, my friends, that we are all of us the servants of God—either his obedient or disobedient servants—either performing or neglecting our Master’s work. Nothing in the world can dissolve this relation between God and us: as He is our Master, so are we his servants. But whether are we obedient or disobedient, faithful or faithless, active or slothful servants? If we were now brought before the judgment seat of Christ, would He say to us, “Well done, good and faithful servant?” My friends, let this important truth sink deep into our hearts. All of us, I am afraid, have abused our character and office, as God’s servants; but God’s servants, nevertheless, we are. He sent us into the world to do a work of the last importance—his eye is upon us to see whether we engage in this work or not. He will call us, He will soon call us to give an account of our stewardship: and then, my friends, He will punish us beyond our fears if we be found faithless, wicked, and slothful servants; but if we are found obedient servants, improving our time and talents to his

glory, He will then reward us beyond our hopes; for who knows the full salvation of those blessed words which He shall then pronounce upon all his servants—"Well done, good and faithful servant, enter thou into the joy of thy Lord?"

Then, I say, admit this important truth, that you are the servants of God—that He hath sent us into the world to do an important work, that his eye is upon us to see whether we attend to or neglect it, and that He will call us to give an account of the manner in which we have performed it. Admit these important truths, my friends, and you will perceive the propriety of adopting the language of this passage—"I must work the works of Him that sent me,"—a work not to eat and drink, and provide for the body, but our Master's work—"while it is day: the night cometh, when no man can work."

Come, then, my fellow-servants of our Divine Master, let us just consider what are the essential requisites of a servant, to do the work of Him that sent him. One essential requisite is this—we must aim at a right object; a second essential requisite is, that we must adopt proper means; and a third is, that we must improve the proper season—we must work while it is called to-day; then we may consider the weighty motives there are to engage us in this work—all centering in this word, "must." All the motives included in a "must-be," conspire to engage us in that work, and support us under it.

I. To do God's work aright, then, we must have, in the first place, *a right aim*.

What then, my dear friends, must we aim at? I am happy to say, that in aiming aright, we must aim at the salvation of our own souls, and the salvation of others—we must be aiming to obtain personal salvation, and to secure it for others; then are we aiming aright; and we

can hardly say that we are aiming aright till that is the case. Consequently, as guilty sinners, we must aim at personal pardon, personal justification, by faith in Jesus Christ. We cannot say that there is any personal salvation that places a man in safe circumstances until the guilty sinner is pardoned. With a man that is under sentence of death, the great object is to obtain pardon. We, my friends, are guilty creatures—we are all guilty before God; and if we would aim aright, we must fix our eye on this object, and strive to obtain personal pardon through the blood of the Lamb. Now, has this been your aim? for I must come to close quarters with you. Pulpit-work is not amusing work—eternity is connected with it, and sermons will either be to you the savour of life unto life or of death unto death. The Lord deeply impress all our minds with this solemn consideration! Have you, then, aimed at the personal pardon of sin? You must acknowledge that you are guilty; and if you must acknowledge that you are guilty, you must also admit that the great object of a guilty sinner should be to aim at personal pardon. Blessed be God, you may have redemption through the blood of Jesus Christ; the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace. Pardon is the greatest blessing which a sinner can enjoy; and, therefore, in doing the work of Him that sent you, it becomes you to aim here first. Come to the determination—I am guilty, and I must be pardoned.

In the salvation of a soul, sanctification as well as justification is included. The work of the Lord is perfect, like Himself; and, therefore, there must be not merely a conscious enjoyment of the favour of God, but a heartfelt possession of the Divine image—a participation of the Divine nature of God. If the Lord could

justify without sanctifying us, we could not enjoy the smile of his countenance. Sanctification is necessary in order that we may obtain a full enjoyment of the light of his countenance. When He pardons and purifies, his smile giveth illumination and life and purity and power. When St. Paul speaks of a sinner, he calls him "darkness." "Ye were sometimes," he does not say, *in* darkness, but "darkness" itself—as dark as a coal into the very centre; the sun cannot shine through a coal; they were not only in darkness, but they were a mass of darkness—darkness itself; and, on the other hand, a believer has not merely his eyes enlightened—he is light itself,—“light in the Lord.” The comparison is perfect: a sinner is a complete mass of darkness, like a piece of coal; but when he has been regenerated and sanctified by the word and Spirit of God, he becomes like a crystal ball of glass, that the sun can shine through from the centre to the circumference. The more we are purified, the light of God’s countenance can not only shine on us but shine through us. Therefore, in aiming at salvation we must aim at sanctification—to be redeemed from all iniquity, and become a peculiar people, zealous of good works. Examine yourselves, my fellow servants, whether you have aimed at this personal justification by faith in the blood of the Lamb, and sanctification by the gracious energies of the Spirit of God in your hearts—the personal enjoyment of the Divine favour, and the personal possession of the Divine image. These are serious inquiries. And, then, my friends, if this be the first great object for ourselves, our next object should be to put the world in possession of this salvation. When we aim at these things, we aim aright.

But I think I hear a gentleman say—“Sir, you are misdirecting the eyes of the congregation—I think you

are not directing them to aim aright." "What, then, makes you think so?" "Your system is so mercenary, so selfish—personal pardon and purity! it is all selfishness." "I take you, then, upon your own ground—that we must aim aright; but you say I am misdirecting the minds of my congregation—be it so, if you please, then: tell you the congregation how they shall aim right, if not by aiming at personal pardon and personal purity—what must they aim at?" "Aim, to be sure, at the glory of God." I thank you, Sir—but blessed be the name of the Lord, when a man is aiming at personal salvation, he is aiming at that which glorifies God more than anything else. I do not know that God is so much glorified in anything as in justifying and sanctifying a penitent believer; and if I am directing you to aim wrong in directing you to aim at personal salvation—I speak it with reverence—then God the Father aimed wrong when He sent his Son into the world to save sinners; if I am directing you to aim wrong when aiming at your personal salvation, Jesus aimed wrong when, though rich, for our sakes He became poor, and gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from all iniquity; and the Holy Ghost aimed wrong in writing this book, in establishing the gospel ministry, and in adopting all his other gracious means, in order to accomplish our salvation. But blessed be the name of the Lord, that He has connected his highest glory with my highest salvation, and He is most glorified in pardoning a guilty sinner and in purifying the defiled. So that, I think I am not misdirecting the eyes of my congregation. In doing the work of Him that sent you, then, I exhort you to aim aright.

II. We must *adopt the proper means for working the works of Him that sent us.*

When a man fixes upon his object, he adopts proper

means to gain it; and if we would do our Master's work, we must do what He commands us. He has appointed means, in the exercise of which we may obtain the appointed salvation.

In obtaining this salvation, and promoting God's glory—for my soul is delighted at the thought that I cannot separate them; it is so wonderful, that God has connected his own honour with the salvation of such a vile creature as I am. In order, I say, to attain these delightful objects, we must, in the first place, *seriously consider our ways*. Our Master, in order to lead to the duty of deep and serious consideration, illustrates its necessity by this comparison—that when a man is going to build a house, or go to war, he sits down first and counts the cost thereof; so that, in aiming at the salvation of your soul, you must sit down and seriously consider, in the light of scripture, your past life, your present state, your future prospects; you must seriously consider the sins that are to be abandoned, the duties that must be performed, the sacrifices that must be made, the conflicts that must be endured. As far, then, as we can understand these serious considerations, we should sit down and count the cost. Brethren, then, have you begun your Master's work here? Has the salvation of your souls awakened your deepest consideration? Have you seriously considered your past lives, your present state, and future condition? Have you considered the duties that must be performed, the sacrifices that must be made, and the conflicts that must be endured? I ask you, my friends, have you thus counted the cost? If not, may you begin to-night! Can you do your Master's work without thinking about it? I am afraid I must say of many of my fellow-servants here,—“O that they were wise, that they understood this, that they would *consider* their latter

end!" I am afraid that many of my Master's servants here have sunk even lower than the ox and the ass, and that it may be said of them—"The ox knoweth his owner, and the ass his master's crib, but Israel doth not know, my people *do not consider*." "Thus saith the Lord, *Consider your ways*." May the salvation of your souls engage your deepest attention, and your most serious consideration!

Then, my friends, if you once begin seriously to consider, I know what must be the result—it is sure to bring you to *your knees*. When a man sits down in a corner, and, with his head leaning on his hand, begins to think how depraved has been his life—how corrupt, and deceitful, and wicked, his heart—how frequently he has offended against God's holy law; following the devices and desires of his own heart, doing what he ought not to do, and leaving undone what he ought to have done, and that there is no help in him—I tell you, when this is the case, that the very next thing he will do in his Master's work, to obtain the salvation of his soul, will be to fall upon his knees. Let the servant of the Lord once begin seriously to consider his case, you will find him on his knees; and it will be said of him as of Saul of Tarsus, when he had entered seriously upon his Master's service,—“Behold, he prayeth!” God grant it may be said of some soul to-night, “Behold, he prayeth!”

And, my brethren, I only add here the duty of *repentance*. John the Baptist said, “Repent ye, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand!” and Jesus Christ, who followed him, said, “Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish.” Pour out your soul to God in earnest petition, and as God lives He will answer you; and you are sure to find power to break off your sins—power to “lay aside every weight, and the sin that doth so easily beset you, and to

run the race set before you ; looking unto Jesus." You lay hold on the omnipotence of God ; and you shall be enabled to fight, and to resist and overcome all your enemies. Let a man thus consider, and thus pray,—having broken off sin by repentance,—and, in the exercise of almighty and omnipotent grace given to him, he will be enabled to believe. Consideration does not save a soul, of itself ; prayer does not save a soul, of itself ; repentance does not save a soul, by itself ; salvation is attached to *faith* : and hence, when the Jews enquired of our Lord what they should do to work the works of God, he said, "This is the work of God, that ye believe in Him whom He hath sent." When you see persons in deep agony of prayer, if they have not enjoyed peace and a sense of the Divine favour, the reason, you may be sure, is that they had not sufficiently exercised their faith. Accept, then, of Jesus Christ as your wisdom, sanctification, and redemption ; accept of Him as He is offered to you in his word : this is giving credit to God. "This is the record that God hath given us eternal life ; and this life is in his Son." Believe the record—Jesus Christ lived for you, bled for you, is willing and ready to pardon your sin and save your soul ! The Lord help you to believe ! "This is the work of God, that ye believe in Him whom He hath sent."

III. Having adopted the means which the Lord has appointed, and which He always honours, *we must improve the appointed season* for working the works of Him that sent us. "I must work the works of Him that sent me, while it is day : the night cometh, when no man can work."

My dear friends, we have "a day." Our Master is no hard master : when He gives us work to perform, He gives his servants not only life, power, and opportunity

to do it in, but He will gloriously reward them, if faithful, for their services. What a Master! He does every thing but work for us. He will not consider, and repent, and believe for us; but He will assist us to do so. Blessed be his name! Only try, my friends, and see if He will not: as sure as the Lord lives He will assist you!

We have, then, "a day" to do it in—a day of *Divine light*. Never was there a brighter day of light than has arisen upon us; the day-spring from on high has indeed visited us, and its mild and attractive lustre shines above us, and around us, and before us. It is "a day"—a gospel day; the light of the knowledge of the glory of God shines upon us in the face of Jesus Christ. It is not merely a day of light, but a day of *power*—it is daylight, not moonlight. It is not the starlight of the patriarchal dispensation, nor the moonlight of the Mosaic dispensation. Thanks be to God, the sun has arisen upon us—it is sunlight! Our day is emphatically called the ministration of the Spirit; it is the medium by which Divine and saving and illuminating influence can be given; the light that shines upon us is life-giving—it is light that gives power: so that, whenever we see a duty or a blessing in the light of God, by the exercise of that light we may obtain power and energy to perform the one and to gain the other. It is a day of power; and, therefore, a day of *grace*. It is a day of grace; and in this day of light, and power, and grace, the guiltiest sinner may be pardoned, the vilest sinner may be purified, and he that is afar off may be made nigh by the blood of Christ. It is a day of abounding grace. Let us work, then, while it is day—let us improve the appointed season!

IV. And, remember, then, there are *Motives to engage us in this work and to support us under it*. "I must work

the works of Him that sent me, while it is day ; *the night cometh, when no man can work.*"

Observe, then, my friends, the motives all centre in this—it is a "must-be." Look at the *greatness of the work itself*, and you will see it is a must-be. Is it not a great work, when our sins must be pardoned, our hearts purified, and our corruptions destroyed? Is it not a great work, when we must be brought from the kingdom of darkness into the kingdom of light? Is it not a great work, when we must be changed from death to life, and brought from the slavery of sin and Satan into the liberty of the children of God? Look at the spiritual renovation of a believing soul! The man is made a new creature—a new creature in Christ Jesus; old things have passed away, and all things have become new—and do you not think a new creation a great work? And if the work is not done in this day, it must remain undone, and we must be undone for ever. See, then, the greatness of this work; and let the language of the text be adopted by every yielding heart—"I must work the works of Him that sent me, while it is day; the night cometh, when no man can work."

Another thing which makes it a must-be, is *the shortness and uncertainty of this day*: "I must work the works of Him that sent me, *while it is day.*" Pray, how long is that day? It is but a short day at the very longest. And of that short day how much has already been spent, and yet how little of God's work have we done! How many are there hearing me, who have lost entirely the morning of this day? How many are there here, fourteen, fifteen, and sixteen years of age, who have never thought seriously of the salvation of their souls—who have never begun to do the work of Him that sent them? May every young man and woman say, Now I must do

it! I am afraid there are some here who have arrived at the noon of life—some twenty-five and thirty years of age, who have never seriously thought of eternity, and the work given them to do—who have lost the most beautiful morning—who have employed themselves in doing the devil's drudgery, in making work for repentance, in grieving angels, and treasuring up wrath against the day of wrath! My blood runs chill to my finger-ends when I think of it! You have been serving your enemy, multiplying your crimes, feeding your corruptions. Oh, my dear friends, I would weep over you! May the Spirit of the Lord incline you to adopt the language of the text, in the spirit of Him who originally spoke it—"I must work the works of Him that sent me, while it is day!" I am afraid there are some who have got into the afternoon of the day—there may be some forty or fifty years of age, that have arrived at three o'clock in the afternoon, and have, all the while, till this moment, been doing the devil's work—multiplying and aggravating their crimes, and ripening for the deepest damnation that God can inflict upon them! Oh, it is high time for you to adopt the language of the text! Forty-five years of age, and never yet made the salvation of your souls matter of serious thoughtful consideration!—Forty-five years of age, and never yet seriously thought or repented of your past sins! You have been only adding to your guilt, increasing your corruption, and aggravating your future condemnation. Remember, the evening is drawing on; begin the work now, seriously and with energy, of Him that sent you. Some of you, perhaps, have got to the eleventh hour—you have arrived at eleven o'clock—half-past eleven—and you have only half an hour of the twelve. There are some here, seventy years of age, sinking into hell with the mill-stones of seventy years' sins hung

around their necks, to crush them into the bottomless abyss of fire and brimstone! What is to be done? Is your remaining time to be spent in the service of the devil, as all your life has been, or not? Remember, that the night is coming—the night is coming, the shadows of the evening are falling upon you, and you have never yet begun the work of your salvation!

I think I hear an old man say, “Do you think He will take me into the vineyard for a single half-hour, when I have dedicated all my past life to sin and guilt, to the world and the flesh? Do you think He will take me now that I have spent so much of my life in this way?” I don’t know, I am sure, whether He will or no—but, oh, pray that He may, from the ground of your heart! Try Him; try Him now; and the Lord be gracious to you! I used to have an old collier meet with me; and he used to say, “Ah, sir, my old master, the devil, wants to have me again; but no, no—no more of thy service, I say; for in the seventy years I served you I knew nothing but trouble and expense; I had no pleasure, no comfort. No, no—no more of your service!” May God grant that you may become, though old sinners, young servants of the Lord Jesus Christ! “I must work the works of Him that sent me, *while it is day.*” The day is so *uncertain*, we cannot tell when this day may finish. We have day now, but how long it may continue God only knows. We do not know that we shall live till to-morrow; and, therefore, all the arguments meet, as it were, in this focus—*now!* “I must work the works of Him that sent me, *while it is day.*” The Lord help us all now to begin! We have multiplied our crimes enough, by doing despite to his Spirit, and by sinning away the day of grace; let us begin now to do “the works of Him that sent us, *while it is day.*”

But there is another reason, besides the greatness of the work and the uncertainty of the season, we have for its performance. Consider, *the issues of the day*: "The night cometh, when no man can work." Oh, my fellow-servants of the living God, consider the issues of the day—the night cometh, whether we are engaged in God's work or neglecting it: night cometh, whether we are labourers or loiterers, whether we improve our talents or neglect our opportunities. "The night cometh!" Oh, it is a delightful night to God's people—a night of ease from pain, a night of rest from labour! "I heard a voice from heaven saying, Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth; Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours; and their works do follow them." It is a night of reward for labour; for God will not let his servants labour without hire: and on the morning of the resurrection, O what a heaven of heavens will it be, when the smile of his countenance comes upon them, and He says, "Well done, good and faithful servant, enter thou into the joy of thy Lord!" Work on, then, my fellow-servant! Thank God, He gives us subsist-money. We have all that He has promised us—food and raiment: "Seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you." And, blessed be God, our subsist-money is better than the sinner's wages: all the wages he receives from his master are confined to time, and afterwards death and damnation are his reward: but our subsist-money is better than his hard master's wages; and then, blessed be God, the wages come at last. O, then, let us labour on: every moment shortens our day—every moment brings us nearer to our rest and our reward!

But while to the faithful the issues of the day are very delightful, they are tremendously awful to God's faithless

servants. If you do not engage in the work till the night cometh—if you are engaged in the devil's drudgery, robbing your Master of his right, squandering away his light, and abusing his power, or using it for violating his laws, and abusing his mercies, and ruining yourselves and others,—you may go on; but the morning lost, night cometh—and that is an awful night—"The night cometh, when no man can work!" There is no light in hell—it is the blackness of darkness; it is not merely outer darkness, but it is an awful, deep, dark, dismal, eternal night, for the man that has spent his day and not done his work. There is no sun, no ray shining from God—no bible—no ministers—no Spirit—no striving of God. There is no work there—all opportunity and power have gone; the poor sinner can do nothing at all, and he falls a helpless prey to damnation and despair. He cannot stop one drop of fire and brimstone that descends upon him; he cannot ward off one fiery dart that the enemy throws on his naked spirit: he falls a helpless victim to his evil passions, to the enemy, and to the gnawing of the worm that never dies! There you will have a clear view as far as you can see; but falling from precipice to precipice, from deep darkness to deeper woe, if you look back upon time, and the means of grace which you enjoyed, and the ministers of the Gospel, and the strivings of the Spirit, the gloom of your darkness will be unalleviated, and your groans, in the regions of damnation, will be answered only by the melancholy echo, *Lost! lost! LOST!* Time lost—mercy lost—souls lost, and lost for ever! "The night cometh, when no man can work!"

Look, then, I say, my brethren, to these arguments: see the greatness of the work—consider the shortness and uncertainty of the day—its blessed issues to the faithful servant, and its awful issues to the faithless and slothful;

and then say, whether, as a stranger, I wish too much for you to adopt the language of the text in its spirit—"I must work the works of Him that hath sent me, while it is day: the night cometh, when no man can work?" May the Spirit of God bring home these thoughts to every heart, that angels may have the delightful news to convey to the upper sanctuary, that every soul in this chapel is determined to do God's work to-night; and that Satan may go back to his dark region, and as he flaps his raven wings at the portals of hell, he may have to say, "They have been my drudges for twenty, forty, seventy years, but I have lost them all!" The Lord grant this, for Christ's sake! Amen.

SERMON XI.

THE INESTIMABLE VALUE OF THE SOUL.

“For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul? For the Son of Man shall come in the glory of his Father with his angels; and then He shall reward every man according to his works.”—MATTHEW xvi. 26, 27.

MY fellow-probationers for eternity, I have a proposition to offer to your consideration—a question which I do not say we can fully solve, but a question which demands our most serious consideration, and deserves the study of the longest life in order to furnish a proper solution to it; a question which is not of vital importance to one, and of little importance to another, but a question in which you and I are personally concerned, and which, as much as possible, we must answer individually for ourselves. Our Divine Master has proposed it for our consideration, and, at the same time, has afforded us the best medium through which to view the subject; and looking at it in that medium, we shall be best able to give an answer to it, though I do not say we can fully answer it.

You will find the question, and also the medium through which you must view it, in the sixteenth chapter of Matthew; the question is contained in the twenty-sixth verse: “For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?” Answer that if you can! “Or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?” The best medium through which to view this all-important and personal subject, is afforded in the next verse: “For the Son of Man shall come in

the glory of his Father, with his angels; and then He shall reward every man according to his works." In order to contemplate this subject properly, we must view it through this medium, and then it is that we shall be best prepared to give a solution to the question, "What is a man profited if he gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?"

Our divine Saviour was obliged to bring such motives to bear upon the minds and hearts of his hearers, because Christianity at that time was opposed, not merely to the natural blindness and enmity of the human heart—for it is so still—but it was opposed to the received maxims of both Jew and Gentile. To the Jew, Christianity was a stumbling-block; to the Gentile, it was foolishness. However the Jew and Gentile might differ in other things, they could agree to persecute Christianity. Herod and Pilate might differ in other points, but they could agree as regarded persecuting Christ; they could be friends here. When a man embraced Christianity in those days, what was the consequence of such a choice? He must lose his character, he must be ranked among the off-scouring of all things; not only so, but he must be fined; if he paid, he must lose his property; if he did not, he must lose his liberty; and if he were faithful in his adherence to this new system, he must lose his life, and that in the most ignominious manner; and he must not only lose his character, property, and liberty, but he must lose his friends too; the father was set against the child, and the child against the father. If a man would be a Christian then, he must be a Christian at some expense. In many cases he must forsake father, mother, brethren, sisters, houses, lands, wife, and children; and when a man has forsaken these, he has not much left in

the world: and yet, all these, in many cases, must be forsaken, to be a Christian. What could support a man under the circumstances which our Lord here supposes to be the case? He must forsake at once all this world's prospects, this world's connections, this world's enjoyments! "What is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?" Look at it, not merely when you see the loss of property, friendship, liberty, and life, but put time and eternity together, combine a day of trial in time with the day of judgment in eternity. "When the Son of man shall come in the glory of his Father with his angels; and then He shall reward every man according to his works."

My dear friends, therefore, I would endeavour, as much as I possibly can, to realize to my own mind, and to impress upon yours, the glory of the Son of Man in the day of judgment, when He will bring this threefold glory—the glory of the Father, Son, and holy angels. In the subject, there are some very important topics, in my humble opinion, which may well arrest our notice. The Lord help us to consider them!

Here, then, I stand, in my imagination, surrounded by the glory of the Father, Son, and holy angels, in the day of judgment, when He will reward every man according to his works: and what do I see in the light of that day? I see, *first*, that you and I have, each of us, put into our possession a jewel called the soul—divine in its origin, astonishing in its properties, and, though fallen from its glory, inestimable in its value. This is seen clearly in the light of the day of judgment. *Secondly*: another truth we see with the light of the judgment-day falling on my subject, and on my soul—I see it is possible that this jewel may be lost, and that its loss will be inex-

pressibly great. *Thirdly*: with the light of the day of judgment shining on my subject, I perceive another truth—I see that persons in this congregation, if they die as they are, will have to suffer and endure this loss. *Fourthly*: another subject which arrests my attention in the light of that day when “the Son of Man shall reward every man according to his works,” is this—I see the inexpressible, inexcusable, inconceivable folly of the man who barter away this jewel, get what he will in exchange for it—let him have the whole world! *Fifthly*: I see another truth, one which I wish to bring to bear with overwhelming and conquering power on every mind, and it is this: in the light of the day of judgment, I see the exemplary wisdom of that man who is determined to have his soul saved, cost him what it will. *Sixthly*: I see it is our bounden duty, and wisdom, and interest, next to the salvation of our own soul, to promote the salvation of others.

I. Now, my friends, I consider that we are, in some measure, buried in the light of the day of judgment, and seeing things now as we shall see them then, it will give fresh light to our subject. And supposing, now, that the Son of Man were in his glory—coming in his glory to reward every man according to his works—then look and see this, and the light bearing upon us will make us transparent, and you will see, that *you and I are put in possession of a jewel called “THE SOUL,”* and that this jewel is especially *Divine in its origin*.

“Yes, you say, you are determined to make a pompous display of something, you know not what. Pray, what is not Divine in its origin? A spire of grass is Divine in its origin; so that you come to make a great show about nothing.” Well, Mr. Objector, can you say that a spire of grass is of Divine origin, in the same sense as the soul

of man? When God wanted to make a sun, He said, "Let there be light," and it was so; when God wanted to make creation, He spoke the word and it was so; but when He wanted to make a soul, He said, "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness;" and in the image of God created He man. We do not know that God said, "Let us make an angel, let us make an archangel;" but we know that He said, "Let us make man in our own likeness, in our own image;" and in the image of God created He man. Find me anything, then, either in heaven or on earth, which can claim Divine origin in the same sense as does the soul of man!

This jewel is not only Divine in its origin, but also *astonishing in its properties*. Even in its present ruined state we can find out properties of Divine origin, proceeding from a Divine parent; it is

"Great in ruins."

Well, one property of this jewel is *vitality*; it is a living principle. When God had made the body of man, He then breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and he became a living soul; so that, though we cannot say of this jewel as we can say of its Parent, that it is *from* everlasting, yet, we can say, that it is *to* everlasting. It is a spark of life from "The resurrection and the life," from "The fountain of life;" and it is the vital principle which gives animation to the whole body. The body without the soul is dead; it is the soul that has brought the body here, and not the body that has brought the soul. It is the soul that looks through your waiting, gazing eyes; it is the soul that moves my tongue to speak; it is this living, vital principle that gives animation to this poor dust and ashes; and without it the body returns to its mother earth.

Another property of the soul is *rationality*. It possesses so much still of the principle of its Divine Parent; and its divine Parent is, emphatically, "The God of Understanding, the Fountain of Knowledge." The soul is not merely a ray of life, but it is a ray of light too; it is an understanding principle. Man, amidst all his wreck, possesses an understanding, that he may know, that he may choose, that he may refuse. He can survey the past, he can look around upon the present, he can glance prospectively into the future. All the commandments, all the promises, all the threatenings of God are addressed to us as rational beings. Observe, my friends, when the Son of Man "shall come in the glory of his Father with his angels, and shall reward every man according to his works"—and I doubt not but that it will strike you forcibly, that in the various consequences of the day of judgment, in the salvation or damnation of every individual, there is very little notice taken of the fall of man; for he will have to stand before the judgment-seat as a rational and accountable creature. The soul is a rational principle; it has the power of reason, to understand, to apprehend, to judge, to select, and to refuse; and as such I am addressing, not stocks and stones, but creatures that can hear, listen, choose, and refuse.

Another principle of the jewel is *immortality*. Like its Divine Parent, it is *to* everlasting, as I before said; the child is never to die. We are not *from* everlasting, you know that; but we are *to* everlasting. This jewel—this vital, rational principle, is immortal—it will never, *never* be extinguished. This jewel must sparkle and shine with increasing glory in "the house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens;" or it must blaze, and burn, and sink down, *down, down* for ever in the pit of

woe! You are immortal creatures, my dear friends, you will never die! I remember a sentence of the late venerable Baxter, where he says you should write on your chimney-pieces, that you may look at it when sitting by the fire-side, and write on the testers of your beds, that when the light shines upon it you may peruse it; and for this purpose, that it may be written on your hearts: and what is this sentence? It is this: "I must soon live in heaven or in hell for ever!" If you forget the whole sermon, forget not Mr. Baxter's sentence.

Thus you see that this jewel is Divine in its origin, and astonishing in its properties; yet *it has fallen from its glory*. The whole plan of redeeming love evidently shows the depth and ruin of the fall of man. A desperate remedy is the remedy of redemption, and it proves a desperate case. Say man is not fallen! Then, why did Jesus suffer so much, endure so much? Why did He die? Why did He rise? The whole outward apparatus of the redemption of the world by the Lord Jesus Christ, proves to a demonstration that man is a fallen, guilty, ruined creature.

"A beam ethereal, sullied, and absorbed!
Though sullied and dishonoured, still divine!"

So this jewel, notwithstanding its degraded state—this jewel is still *inestimable in its value*. My friends, whatever value you place upon it, God views it as of inestimable worth.

Such is the value of this jewel, that, when it was lost, when it got into the hands of the great robber and murderer, the enemy of souls, who endeavoured to deface its glory, a council sat, Trinity in Unity, to restore it again. Such was the value of this jewel still in the eye of God the Father—He so loved it as to give his only begotten Son for the purpose of recovering it out of the

hands of the enemy, and restoring it to the favour and image of God. Such was the value of this jewel, that Jesus Christ the Son could not recover it unless He bid farewell to his Father's glory; yet "He who was rich for our sakes became poor, that we, through his poverty might become rich." Such was its value, that He came and sojourned thirty-three years in human nature, on purpose to rescue it from the grasp of the robber and murderer. Such was its value, that He could not recover it out of the hands of the enemy until He had paid for it the price of his own blood. Jesus put such a value upon the jewel, that "We were redeemed," as Peter says, "not with corruptible things, such as silver and gold,"—corruptible things! Peter, dost thou call silver and gold corruptible things? Yes, he says, "We were redeemed, not with corruptible things, such as silver and gold, but with the precious blood of Christ!" When all the treasures of wisdom pay so precious a price for an article, depend upon it, that article is inestimable in value. Such was the value of the soul that Jesus paid for it the precious price of his own blood. Dr. Young, when he looks at it, and when he sees Jesus dying on the cross for the world, says,

"A thousand worlds so bought, were bought too dear!"

. Ah, Doctor, I differ from you; Christ knew the value of the soul, whether you do or not. In Him were all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge, and He knew its value so well, that He did not think *one* world of souls was bought too dear. Such is the value of the soul, that the HOLY GHOST turns Author, and writes a book on purpose that the soul may gain a perfect knowledge of itself—a knowledge of its state, and duties, and interests.

This book was written on purpose that souls may be saved. Such is the value of the soul, that He establishes and supports a ministry. The reason why ministers are called and qualified, is neither more nor less than to get jewels out of the hands of the robber, and bring them under the operation of divine grace, that they may be polished and prepared to sparkle in the crown of Christ, and shine in the cabinet of heaven for ever. Such is the value of souls, that the great enemy and murderer of the soul does not think four-score years of labour lost, if he can ruin it at last; though he knows that its ruin will increase his own punishment, augment his own misery, and inflame his own hell. Such is the value of the soul, that when angels see the least emotion of grief on account of sin,

“Sensations new in angels’ bosoms rise.”

As soon as they see a penitential tear flowing, as soon as they hear the breath of conviction, crying, “God be merciful to me a sinner,” they tune their harps afresh, and sing new songs of praise. I pray that the inspecting angel over this congregation may have to fly back to his own heaven, and, as he wings his course, may he blow the trumpet, saying, “souls saved! *souls saved!* SOULS SAVED!” and the heavenly host hearing the news, shall echo back, “Glory be to God in the highest, on earth peace and good-will towards men!” May the Lord grant it! In a word, such is the value of the soul, that when it is saved our Lord does not think “a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens,” too good a habitation for it; he does not think “a crown of glory, which fadeth not away,” too rich for it; he does not think “a kingdom, which shall not be moved,” too valuable for it. Look at it yourselves, with the light of the Father and the

Son, and the day of judgment, shining on this important subject, and there you will see yourselves possessed of this invaluable jewel called the soul.

II. But, oh, my friends, with the light of the day of judgment falling on the soul, I see another awful truth, —*I see it is possible that this jewel may be lost, and that its loss will be inexpressibly great.*

“What will it profit a man if he gain the whole world, and lose this jewel?”

What is the loss of a lost soul? The loss of all grace in time; the loss of all glory in eternity. The loss of a lost soul is a lost heaven—no inheritance, no house not made with hands, no crown, no kingdom, no glory! The loss, therefore, of a lost soul is inexpressibly great, even in a negative point of view. But, when I look at it in the light of the day of judgment, I find that one part of the loss of a lost soul arises from the thunder-clap of the mouth of the Judge, “*Depart from me!*” Can you tell that loss? No, my friends, no human mind can conceive the loss included in these few words from the mouth of Him that sits upon the throne, “when He comes in his glory, with his holy angels, to reward every man according to his works.” There is no man can conceive the loss included in the few words, **DEPART FROM ME!** But that is only half the sentence, and, therefore, not half the loss; the loss of a lost soul is, “Ye cursed, go into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels!”

Now conceive the loss of a lost soul! You ask, What is the region in which a lost soul lives? I answer, “the blackness of darkness for ever.” What is the bed on which a lost soul lies down? Fire and brimstone for ever. What are the employments of a lost soul? Looking behind it,—remembering the life-time, as Abraham says

to the rich man—and seeing time lost, means lost, ordinances lost, sabbaths lost, ministers lost, and the strivings of the Holy Spirit lost! Looking upward, and seeing heaven lost, a crown lost, glory lost! *lost!* LOST! for ever! Souls lost are looking around them, and every sight gives an increase of pain. Such are the employments of a lost soul, when looking backwards, forwards, downwards. In the Bible their *employments* are termed “Weeping, wailing, and gnashing of teeth.” Yes; and what are the *prospects* of a lost soul! I cannot solve the question. When it glances into eternity, and when it looks forward, there are nothing but mountains of woe succeeding each other, every mountain pressing heavier than that which preceded it. The prospect of a lost soul is a prospect of increasing and eternal woe; and then there is the passing bell ringing for ever over this soul—for ever! *for ever!* FOR EVER! eternity! *eternity!* ETERNITY!

III. Again: in the light of the day of judgment, we see *who the characters are in this congregation who, if they die as they are, will have to suffer and to endure this loss.*

I think I hear you say, and it is a very proper inquiry, “Is it I? You almost frightened us when you told us of the loss of a lost soul.” Yes. But what I said was almost a heavenly description of hell. “Is it I? *Is it I?* shall I have to endure this loss?” Look at the Scriptures, and they will tell you. If you are living in open sin, it is *you*. If you are a swearer, if you are a Sabbath-breaker, if you are a drunkard, if you are a whoremonger, if you are unjust, unclean, it is *you*; and, if you die as you are, you will have to endure this loss for ever. Hear the word of the Lord: “Marvel not at this, for the hour is coming in which all that are in their graves shall hear

his voice, and shall come forth; they that have done good unto the resurrection of life; *and they that have done evil unto the resurrection of damnation.*" Are you doing evil? Are you evil doers, evil lovers, evil liverers? If you be doing evil, loving evil, living in evil; and if you die as you are, and were to drop down dead this moment, you would drop into hell. "Indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish, upon every soul of man that doeth evil." "Is it I?" Are you a swearer? it is *you!* A sabbath-breaker? a liar? or unjust? "Is it I?" It is *you!* And, if you die in that condition, you are lost. Look into your Bibles. But perhaps you say, "I hope, then, I am safe, for I am not a swearer, a liar, a Sabbath-breaker, nor guilty of any open sin." Well, thanks be to God for that! but you are a sinner still. Have you repented? The Judge says, "Except ye *repent* ye shall all perish." "The times of this ignorance God winked at, but now He commandeth all men everywhere to repent." Why? "Because He hath appointed a day in the which He will judge the world in righteousness by that man He hath ordained." I trust most of you are not open sinners in the way I have named; but have you repented? Have you been convinced of your sinful state and bondage? Have you mourned before God on account of your sin? Have you renounced your sin? Have you applied at a throne of mercy? Have you been at a throne of grace? Have you been pleading guilty, and asking for pardon, for mercy, for peace? If not, may the Lord give you true repentance to-night! "Is it I?" Are you a believer in Christ? "He that believeth not, is condemned already." "He that believeth not, the wrath of God abideth on him." "He that believeth not, shall be damned." That is the word of the Lord. Are you a believer in Christ? Have

you that faith which brings you out of yourself to Christ, and makes you lay hold of the Redeemer? Have you that faith which makes you embrace the Lord Jesus Christ as your “wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption?” Have you that living and life-giving faith which brings salvation wherever it is in operation? If you are an unbeliever—if you die in unbelief you cannot be saved; and, therefore, it is YOU. “Is it I?” Look at it in the light of the day of judgment, and you will there clearly discover, that, if you be living without the love of God in your heart, if Jesus has not the supreme place in your affections, it is YOU. “He that loveth father or mother, or brother or sister, or houses or land more than me, is not worthy of me; and he that loveth son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me.” ‘Read, mark, learn, and inwardly digest’ the twenty-fifth chapter of Matthew; and then you will know whether it is you or not. The foolish virgins lost their souls. We do not read that they were swearers, Sabbath-breakers, and open sinners; but the foolish virgins lost their souls; and what was the reason? They lost the love of God—their lamps went out. I think it is one of the most heart-rending sounds, when the poor backslider cries, “My lamp is out! my lamp is out!” The Lord grant that you may have it replenished to-night! You see you are destitute of the love of God; and you say, “Give us of your oil, my lamp is out.” Oh, brethren, what a cry will that be, in the day when the Son of Man cometh to reward every man according to his works!—“My lamp is out! my soul is undone! *undone!* **UNDONE!**”

The man that had but one talent was destitute of the love of God. He did not improve his talent to the glory of his Divine Master; and what was his plea? it shows that he had not the love of God in him: “I knew that

Thou wast a hard master ; I knew that Thou wast an austere Man." But I tell you that there never was a man who had the love of God in his heart that said so. There are some here who have served him twenty, thirty, forty years, and there is not one that will go forth and say, "He is a hard master ;" for, bless God ! He is not. The plea is his charge, and shows clearly that the man is destitute of the love of God, and will not improve his talent. I am certain there never was, and never will be, a man with the love of God in his heart who will say of Jesus Christ that He is a hard master. Take it from that wicked servant, who has come with a lie in his mouth ; that slothful servant, who has not the principle of the love of God in his heart ; and bind him hand and foot, and cast him into outer darkness.

The last charge in the 25th of Matthew shows that the love of God was not in the heart : "I was an hungered, and ye gave me no meat ; I was thirsty, and ye gave me no drink ; I was a stranger, and ye took me not in ; naked, and ye clothed me not." Our Lord did not bring a charge of positive crime, but He gives clear proof that the man had not the supreme love of God in the heart ; for if he had, and had seen Christ naked in his members, hungry in his members, thirsty in his members, sick and in prison in his members, he would have afforded relief. Wherever a christian sees the image of Christ in another person, he will never be ashamed of it ; and, consequently, the charge here brought against an omission of duty, clearly proves the absence of the principle of the love of God : they lost their souls because they had not the love of God in their hearts. Brethren, examine yourselves ; the day and the hour will come when you and I shall have to stand before the bar of God, and we must be rewarded according to our works ; and, therefore, I pray that we may see our-

selves now in the light of the day of judgment!—If we die as we are, we are lost; may we, therefore, be determined to have our souls saved, cost us what it will!

IV. In the light of the day of Judgment, another subject comes to be noticed, and that is—I wish I had better words for it—*The indescribable, inexpressible, inconceivable folly of the man that sells his soul, barter away this jewel, get what he will in exchange.*

“Here is a jewel; I have made a bargain for it, I have given it up.” Well, my friend, what is your agreement? “I am to have the whole world: I have sold my soul, given up my jewel, but I am to have the whole world in exchange.” I would say to the man, Suppose it were possible that you could gain the whole world in exchange for the soul, yet, my brother, you are an inexpressible, inexcusable, inconceivable fool; you are worse than a madman. Well, but he gains all the *riches* of the world for eighty years; there is not an acre of ground in the universe but what is his own: “All the fields, all the houses, all the cottages are my own; every yard of ground is my own; every farthing of money is my own; every particle of gold, every particle of silver, every particle of copper, the whole world is mine! I possess this globe!” Very well, suppose he does, that he enjoys it for eighty years; after he has enjoyed the whole world, all that is called personal property or real property, the day comes, and he has lost his soul, he has become an eternal bankrupt, he has become a beggar, he is in prison for debt, in the gaol of eternal woe for ever and ever!

Yes; but then he gains all the *honours* of the world, besides all its riches. Very well, be it so; he gains it for eighty years—and what are the honours of the world? Dr. Watts properly calls it by this name:—

“Honour’s a puff of noisy breath.”

What! will a man sell his soul, of inestimable value, for a "puff of noisy breath?" His name is known throughout the whole world; it becomes a subject for the poet, the painter, and the musician; they all engage to sound the praise of this great king; he gains all the honours of the world for eighty years, after which he loses his soul; and then angels frown, devils taunt, and sinners sneer, and he is the object of the most deep abhorrence for ever and ever!

But, besides all this, he gains all the *pleasures* of the world, separate from true religion; "the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life;" he gains all these pleasures for eighty years. Well, and what then? He loses all the spiritual and divine pleasures of religion; when he comes to die, all the pleasures of the world die out at once, and then he enters into pain universal, exquisite, increasing, and eternal.

I will suppose a case. The man is a king; he gains the whole world, all its honours, and all its pleasures; he is the king of all kings, the lord of all lords. He is approached by one of his subjects, who says, "Please, your majesty, will you permit one of the most humble of your subjects to propose a question to your majesty?" Perhaps he will condescend to reply, "Say on." "May it please your gracious majesty, I will take the liberty of reading the first verse of the fifth chapter of the Epistle to the Romans." "Say on." "'Therefore, being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ: by whom also we have access into this grace, wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God.' May I humbly ask your majesty, whether you know anything about this?" "No!" he replies, "I know nothing about justification by faith; I know nothing about your access to the favour of God; I know

nothing about your peace with God through Jesus Christ; I know nothing about your rejoicing in hope of the glory of God; I know nothing about it!" "Then, please your majesty, there are hundreds of subjects in your realm who do." Lord increase the number! Suppose a man gains all the riches, and honours, and pleasures of the world, and yet knows nothing of justification by faith; knows nothing of peace with God; knows nothing of intercourse and communion with God; knows nothing of rejoicing in hope of the glory of God; he loses all these sublime, spiritual and divine pleasures in time, loses all heaven for ever, and sinks into pain, exquisite, universal, increasing, and eternal. This, I say, is not the rant of declamation; I speak the words of truth and soberness when I say, the man is an inexpressible, inexcusable, inconceivable fool, that barter away this jewel, get what he will in exchange.

But, then, you see I am placed in very peculiar circumstances, and circumstances out of which I cannot extricate myself, and from which you cannot extricate me. What are these? I will give you a case: suppose a man should barter away this jewel, and gain a world in exchange; if that man be an inexcusable, inexpressible and inconceivable fool, will you please give me a name—for I cannot find a proper one—for the man who throws away the jewel and gets nothing in exchange! How many hundreds are there in this congregation—God! Thou knowest how many!—who are throwing away this jewel, and yet get nothing in the world in exchange; who throw away this jewel for a momentary sin, for a momentary pleasure, for a momentary profit! Now, my friends, I would have you fairly look at the subject in the light of the day of judgment; and, then, I say, give me a name for the man who has this precious jewel, and is throwing

it away, getting nothing from the world in exchange for it but a paltry sin, a vile sin, a God-dishonouring sin, a soul-destroying sin! The light of the day of judgment shine on every sinner's mind!

I have come at last to my point, which I have been a long time aiming at; and it is this:

V. In the light of the day of Judgment I see *The exemplary wisdom of that man who is determined to have the soul saved, cost what it will.*

I have a soul to save, a hell to shun; I have iniquities to be pardoned, and a heart to change; I have a God to serve, and a heaven to gain; and I have a Saviour that can and will do it for me. "I will arise, and go to my Father." There is exemplary wisdom; and I would have you all cherish that feeling! I should almost die for joy, if I thought that every sinner in this place gave proof of that wisdom. It were too much for me, if every sinner in this place returned home with the determination, "I will have my soul saved, cost what it will; I will not have my jewel thrown into a lumber-room, I will have it polished, and made fit to sparkle in the crown of Christ, and in the cabinet of heaven to all eternity!" Lord grant me success!

When a man begins to have serious thoughts about salvation, he then manifests true wisdom. When a man begins to pray "Lord save my soul!"—when you see a man cutting off a right hand sin, ask him what is the reason, and he will reply, that he could not preserve his soul and keep on his hand, and that it is better for him to go with one hand into heaven, than that he should retain both and his whole body be cast into hell. Wherever there is sin, there is mortification; and, consequently, if he does not cut off his right hand it is sure to kill him; but if he cuts it off he is sure to live: and, therefore, it

is the highest, the truest wisdom to say, "I am determined to have my soul saved, though my right hand sin should go." Zaccheus was determined to have his soul saved, and there went one half of his fortune at a stroke. The Ephesians were determined to have their souls saved, and they burned their books, the price of which was counted at fifty thousand pieces of silver. Paul was determined to have his soul saved, and therefore he says, "The things that were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ. Yea, doubtless, and I count all things but loss, for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord." And I pray that the light of eternity may fall on every mind, every heart, and you will see now, as you will see then, the exemplary wisdom of the man who is determined to save his soul, cost what it will! Such a man's choice is justified by God the Father, in giving his Son; such a man's choice is justified by the blood of the Son of God, who gave Himself to redeem us from all iniquity; such a man's choice is justified by the influences of the Holy Spirit; such a man's choice is justified by the malice of devils, who have striven to destroy him; such a man's choice is justified by the joy of angels; such a man's choice is justified by the torments of hell, which he has laboured to avoid; such a man's choice is justified by the glories of heaven, which he is determined to secure. God the Father, God the Son, God the Holy Ghost, a Trinity in Unity; all in heaven; all in hell; angels and devils; all justify the proceedings of that man who is determined to have his soul saved, cost what it will!

Oh, my friends, here I come to a point, though you will say that I have been a long time in arriving at it—that point is, that the light of the judgment day may shine on every one, that every one may be the wise man who is determined to have the jewel polished prepared and fitted

to appear in the presence of God to all eternity! God grant me success! that when we come to the light of that day, I may see many a score who have set off for heaven this night; who have sought God in Christ this night; who have been snatched from the hands of the robber this night; many a scarce jewel polished, and prepared, and sanctified this night. Lord grant this!

VI. I may just glance at the fact, that you see in the light of the day of judgment, that *next to the salvation of our own souls, it is our highest duty and best interest to promote the salvation of others.*

There is no work like that of saving souls. It is your duty to be followers of Jesus Christ, imitators of Jesus Christ, conformed to the image of God's Son. Now, who is the man, who is the woman, that is most like Christ? It is the man and the woman determined to save souls. Here is the peculiarity of Christ; He who was rich, for our sakes became poor; He emptied Himself; He became of no reputation; He became in the fashion of a man, and submitted to death, even the death of the cross, on purpose to save souls. There is no person who comes so near Jesus Christ in his object, aim, ends, studies, and labours, as the man who is determined to save other souls as well as his own.

Oh, ye teachers of the Sunday-School, what a honourable office is yours! not because you teach the dear darlings to read—that is a secondary point—no, your object is to save souls; it is to get their souls under the genial operation of the Spirit of God; it is to make them gems, and I trust you will see them sparkle in the beauty of holiness, in the house of our God for ever and ever. God grant you success! That is our highest wisdom. The general definition of wisdom is this: "It aims at the best object, adopts the best means, and employs the best

season." If wisdom aims at the highest object, can you aim at a higher object than to save souls? If wisdom adopts the best means, can you tell me of better means than the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ, to accomplish that end? If wisdom improves the best season, now is the best season, now is the accepted time, now is the day of salvation. Thus you see, my friends, it is the highest wisdom, next to the salvation of our own souls, to promote the salvation of others; and no doubt it will be our best interest. There is no pleasure like that of saving souls. It is the joy of the minister's heart to save souls. It was the joy of the Redeemer's heart to save souls. What will be the joy of ministers and teachers—what will be our joy and crown of rejoicing, when we see so many precious souls brought to the fold of God, brought into the favour of God; so many precious souls clothed in the righteousness of Christ, walking the golden streets of the New Jerusalem, and crowned with a crown of glory! When we contemplate the misery of souls that have not been saved, and the happiness they possess who have been saved; and when we consider the light of the day of judgment, that we have been the instrument of saving souls; oh, if we were not supported by an Omnipotent God, we should almost die with joy to see the salvation of a saved soul, of which we have been the instrument! My dear friends, look at the day of judgment, "when the Son of Man shall come in the glory of his Father, with his angels, to reward every man according to his works." If you would see things in their proper light—if you want to know the value of the soul, look at it in the light of the day of judgment.

I ask the question, and the day of judgment will answer it, Where are the millions upon millions of money that has been spent in war? I cannot give you an answer that

will satisfy you: look at it in the light of the day of judgment, and answer it for yourselves. What has become of the thousands upon thousands that have been spent in the pleasures of sin—at playhouses, on the race-ground, at the gambling-table, and in other things of that sort? Where are the thousands of money that have been thus spent? There they are on the left hand of the Judge—there they are in the souls that are lost! *lost!* LOST! There, see them in horrid goblins! there, see them in all the shapes of spectres and devils! There they are, you see them in all the torments of the impenitent! I ask again, Where are the hundreds and the few thousands of pounds that have been spent in the salvation of souls, in the support of the ministry, in the support of Sabbath-Schools, in the support of missionary efforts? Where are the few thousands that have been spent in this great work? There they are, at the RIGHT hand of God! There, see them in the jewels sparkling in the crown of Christ! there, see them in those happy faces! and hear them in those sounding harps!—their song, “Worthy the Lamb!” You will say, “My poor shilling, my poor pound come to that! Immortal souls were saved from eternal woe, and were brought to the right hand of God! Who would have thought that my poor money would have come to that?” Look, and see the value of property in the light of the day of judgment, when the Son of Man shall come in the glory of his Father, with his holy angels, to reward every man according to his works.

SERMON XII.

FAITH AND ITS EFFECTS.

“Be not afraid; only believe.”—MARK v. 36.

THE office of a minister of the Gospel is certainly the most important—in one point of view the most awful, in another point of view the most delightful—in which it is possible for a human or intelligent being to engage. When he declares the wonderful counsels of God, and standing upon Mount Ebal, there pronounces the awful denunciations of God against sin, then surely his employment is of a most awful character: but when he stands on Mount Gerazim, and there pronounces the blessings of God upon the obedient and believing, his office is the most delightful. There is one peculiar difficulty of his office—one peculiar, delightful difficulty: that is, he has to exhibit the Lord Jesus Christ to his hearers; and he can never do justice to his subject. After he has expended all the figures possible to represent the subject to his own mind,—heaped hyperbole upon hyperbole,—after he has exhausted all his powers of mind—after he has laid seas, and stars, and suns under contribution, to illustrate it; he finds that he has given—shall I say it?—a very beggarly description of the Lord Jesus Christ. Though the subject is delightful, yet, after he has expended all his powers of illustration and description, he must say that the thousandth part has not been told. I shall endeavour, with the help of God, to turn your attention to this subject, to fix your gaze upon Christ,

and then say, as you contemplate Him, "Be not afraid, only believe."

Were Jesus Christ in the situation in which I am now placed, where would He find characters to whom these words are personally, particularly applicable? To whom would He say, "Be not afraid, only believe"? In order to find this out, let us consider to whom they are applicable, as in the case of Jairus; then, secondly, let us consider the nature of the delightful duty and encouragement included in these words—"Be not afraid, only believe;" and, then, the grounds that such persons have, to exercise the duty and claim the encouragement which the words contain.

I. *Where shall we find characters on whom we may fix our eye, and address to them the words of the text, "Be not afraid, only believe?"*

Jairus, to whom these words were primarily addressed, had one daughter, and she was at the point of death; all the deep yearnings of a father's heart were roused, that he might, if possible, obtain life and health for his daughter. He did not care what it cost him, and in these affecting circumstances he went to Christ. He was sensible, therefore, that his child was at the very point of death. There was an evil he wanted to remove—the sickness of his child: a danger he wanted to prevent—the death of his child: and a blessing he wanted to procure—the renewed health and strength of his child.

1. He was compelled, by a sense of want, to go to Jesus. Have you, then, my friends, a sense of want? The *first* qualification of a soul coming to Jesus Christ, acceptably, is this—a *sense of want*. Have you a deep, heartfelt sense of want? Have you a sense of some evil you want removed? then, go to Jesus Christ. Have

you a sense of some danger you want to prevent? then, go to Jesus Christ. Have you a sense of the want of some blessing you have not, or the increase of some mercy you have? then, that deep sense of want authorizes you to go to Christ; and, under that sense of want, to have the evil removed, the danger prevented, and the blessings you need bestowed upon you. Have you a sense of want, arising from conscious guilt? Do you sensibly feel that you are a guilty sinner? Have you a deep sense of the prevalence of reigning corruption, and of the variety and power of the peculiar temptations to which you are exposed? then you are authorized to go to Christ. That is one qualification which will, in addition to some others, authorize us to say to you, "Be not afraid, only believe." Jairus, on account of his child, had a sense of want, and a deep one too.

2. But a *second* qualification is this: we must not merely indulge or express our sense of want to our fellow creatures. Jairus's sense of want brought him to the feet of Jesus. Some of the other Gospels say, that he came and fell down at Jesus's feet and worshipped. It is not a sense of want indulged that prepares us for the application of the text, but such a sense of want as brings us out of ourselves—out of a dependance on mere external means—to the feet of Jesus, there to lay, and there to worship. A person at the feet of Jesus, with a sense of want that drives him there to lay and there to worship, is, in a manner, though not entirely, prepared for the application of these words—"Be not afraid, only believe."

3. Jairus's sense of want, *thirdly*, brought him to the feet of his Divine Redeemer, where, worshipping, he breathed out his deep sense of want in correspondent and

earnest supplication. Here, Mark says, when he fell at the feet of Jesus, "He besought Him greatly. My little daughter is at the point of death; come, and lay thy hand on her." You see the father at the feet of Jesus Christ, his earnestness, and the growing pathos of his voice, and all the breathings of a father's soul—his whole soul was in his petition. He did not whisper his petition, he did not utter it in a lukewarm manner, he was not afraid of any person hearing him pray; his sense of want brought him to the feet of Jesus; and, with the conviction that Jesus Christ alone could relieve him, his sense of want was breathed out in corresponding language, and in a corresponding tone of voice; for it is said, "He besought the Lord greatly, have mercy on me! My little daughter is at the point of death; come, lay thy hand on her, and she shall live!"

Never did a soul beseech the Lord greatly, in vain. "If we have not, it is because we ask not, or because we ask amiss;" our souls are not in our prayers—our desires die on our lips. We must retain the sense of want, and breathe it in the agony of desire; if we only beseech the Lord greatly, our prayer must at once engage the Lord's ear, the Lord's eye, the Lord's heart, the Lord's hands. Oh, may the Lord help us to seek Him with our whole hearts! I have observed in my classes, that persons, before they sought and found the peace of God, were in distress; but we do not find that they get peace till they beseech the Lord greatly. They have kneeled down and seemed to be in great earnest, and they came another night; but they never got the answer of peace till they came to the agony; and when they besought the Lord greatly, they never sought in vain. My friends, the reason we have not what we ask is, that we do not put our soul in our petitions—we do not pour out our souls

to God. Oh, may we possess that entire and deep sense of want which shall lead us to cry out continually, in earnest supplication, and beseech the Lord greatly!

4. But there is another qualification here—the crowning qualification of all—Jairus not only presented the petition for his child in an agony of desire, but, strong as his desire was, blessed be God! his *faith* was stronger—“he besought the Lord greatly.” And what was his prayer? He said, “Lay thine hand on her and”—oh, the blessedness in these four words!—“*and she shall live!*” There was faith in the prayer, not merely the desire of the soul—there was strong faith in the prayer; “Lay thine hand on her, and she shall live.” I believe she shall—I believe there is that saving virtue and power in thy hand, that if Thou wilt but come to my dear and only child, and lay thine hand on her, she shall live. “According to thy faith be it unto thee!” Our Divine Redeemer did not hesitate a single moment when this agony of prayer concluded with such out-goings of faith—“Thy daughter shall live; if she be dead, she shall live.” The reason, my dear friends, we do not enjoy more, is, not that there is little power in prayer, but that we do not pray enough with faith. We may pray for the removal of our corruption, and for the sanctification of our nature; and pray earnestly too; but we do not say in the language of Jairus, Lay thy hand upon me, and sin shall be destroyed, and I shall be sanctified throughout. We may be under peculiar temptation, and we may pray earnestly and honestly to be delivered out of them, but we do not put faith in our prayer. Lay thy hand on me, and I shall be delivered. The reason we do not live in a higher state of salvation, is not so much from a want of praying as from a want of believing in our prayers. We do not “ask in faith, nothing doubting.”

Here the ruler interceded in faith, for the life and for the health of his daughter. It was a very earnest petition, and he besought the Lord greatly, to lay his hand upon her; but it was faith, strong faith, that added, "and she shall live!" Now then, my friends, have you such a sense of want? Does it bring you to Jesus Christ? Do you breathe out that sense of want in earnest prayer? Is that prayer mixed with faith? Do you believe that the Lord Jesus Christ will hear and answer it? Then I say to you, "Be not afraid, only believe." Now, consider,

II. Secondly, *The nature of this delightful duty and privilege.*

Fear, you know, my dear friends, is a painful passion, arising from the idea that we have lost some good, and are not likely to recover it; or from the apprehension of some evil we cannot avoid or remove; and, because connected in some way with pain, it is therefore called tormenting fear. Now, a man at the feet of Jesus Christ has no right to indulge tormenting fear. There is no danger to which you are exposed, but you can be saved from—no evil you feel, but you can be delivered from—while there is no blessing that is promised to men in the word of God, but you may obtain. To a soul, then, at the feet of Jesus, beseeching Him greatly, and believingly, we may say, with the greatest confidence—and may the Spirit of God give effect to it!—"Be not afraid, only believe." You have no right to fear: if at the feet of Jesus Christ, there is no ground for tormenting fear; for, from all that you fear you may be delivered, and you shall be delivered. "Be not afraid," precious soul at the feet of Jesus; there, breathing out your soul in earnest, believing prayer, "Be not afraid, only believe."

In one of my classes, one night, one collier said to another collier, greatly downcast in spirit,—“Be not afraid, poor fellow; why dost thou fear? Be not afraid! Thou wilt be saved—as sure as thou believest, thou wilt be saved; because it is said, ‘He that believeth, shall be saved.’” “But then,” says he, “what is this believing—what is faith?” The great acts of salvation are compared to the acts of the soul in different parts of the body. Sometimes faith is called a looking, as the soul acting in the eye; sometimes it is called approving, as the soul acting in the heart; and sometimes it is called embracing, or appropriating, as the soul acting by the hand. All these views may be included in the great act of believing. To believe in Christ, then, you must fix your eye on Him, and endeavour to apprehend Him. Believing is not a blind act; it is an act of light and knowledge. Fix your eye, then, on Christ; contemplate and gaze on his fulness; get a clear and scriptural view and apprehension of Jesus Christ, of his person, and offices, and salvation, and love, and grace. “Only believe,” says the Redeemer; “*Look* unto me, and be ye saved.” Get as clear, and deep, and scriptural apprehensions of Him as his word can afford; and, no doubt, looking to Jesus Christ, the Holy Ghost will assist you, and you shall experience the depths of the riches of mercy and love: behold the Lamb of God who taketh away the sins of the world, and see how able and willing He is to save to the uttermost all who come unto God by Him!

Believing on the Lord Jesus Christ is sometimes compared to the action of the heart. Brethren, clear apprehensions are not enough. A person may have clear apprehensions of Jesus Christ, while, at the same time, he is not saved. In the great act of believing, therefore, on the Lord Jesus Christ, there must be a cordial, a

heartfelt, delightful approbation of Him. He must not merely be discovered as an only and all-sufficient Saviour, but He must be approved; there must be the cordial, delightful approbation of Him in the heart, to receive Jesus and his salvation, as presented and offered in his word. "With the heart man believeth unto righteousness."

But there wants something more, still, for the completion of the act of faith, and that is illustrated by the action of the hand; for faith is sometimes not only compared to the action of the soul in the eye and the heart, but particularly, to the action of the hand, in receiving and appropriating. And here is the difficulty in faith:—the man is a guilty sinner; he is called to accept of Christ with an empty hand, and, with an empty hand, to appropriate salvation. Here he stops and reasons with himself: "Yes; but I do not know. I am urged to believe; and that is to accept what is here promised; to appropriate, to take into my hand, what is freely offered. Is it not presumption? I doubt it is presumption." Yes! it is presumption to refuse it! "Be not afraid, then, only believe." Accept that which is freely promised and offered—make a personal appropriation of it. You know, the salvation of the Gospel is compared to a feast; and the servants go and invite the guests, and they come into the feast—they comply with the invitation. Very well; so far it is right; but is complying with the invitation to the feast enough? Will sitting at the table—the having a clear apprehension of the nature of the dishes on the table, feed the hungry man? Is the cordial approbation of them enough? Does this feed the man? No, no; there must be appropriation, or, if he came in empty, he must go away famished. The mere coming in as a guest, and

sitting at the table, and approving of the provision of the household, will not—nothing can—feed the hungry, but a personal appropriation of the food. You may comply with the invitation—you may sit at the table—you may wonder and admire,—but if you do not appropriate the provision of the household, you will never be fed, you will never be satisfied, you will never be saved. Our Lord said to his disciples sitting at the table, “Eat, O friends, and drink, O beloved.” “Be not afraid, only believe.” You that have apprehended, and you that have approved,—the Lord grant the Spirit of God to rest upon you!—*appropriate!* Lay hold on the salvation of God: it is yours, it is presumption to refuse—it is false humility to deny it, if you are at the feet of Jesus—“Be not afraid, only believe;” stretch out thy empty hand and take the promised blessings—take and eat the provision set before you, and rejoice in the God of your salvation. The Lord grant you the clear view and the appropriating act of faith!

III. Consider *the right you have to all the encouragement of the text.* “Be not afraid; only believe.”

If you are at the feet of Jesus, in the sense that I have now briefly described, you have a right—an absolute, personal, scriptural right—to flee to and appropriate the salvation of God as your own. Why, my friends, you are in the very place where a sinner ought to be—the very place where I wish to be for ever; you are brought out of yourselves to the feet of Jesus. You are at the feet of Jesus, and a higher place I do not wish to attain. Did He ever spurn one away that came to his feet? You remember the poor woman who came for her daughter, and fell at his feet, and said, “Lord, help me!” At first He seemed rather to spurn her away, when He said, “It is not meet to take the children’s bread, and to cast it to

dogs. And she said, "Truth, Lord; yet the dogs eat of the crumbs which fall from their master's table." Then Jesus answered, and said unto her, "O woman, great is thy faith; be it even unto thee as thou wilt." And her daughter was made whole from that very hour. Did He spurn Mary Magdalen away, when she came to his feet? A Pharisee would have done that, but not He. He spurn her away! "Woman," said He, in his great mercy, "Woman, be of good cheer; thy sins, which are many, are forgiven thee." And when his beloved disciple saw Him in his glory in heaven, and fell at his feet, did He spurn John away? No, the beloved disciple says, "I fell at his feet as dead, and He laid his right hand upon me, saying unto me, Fear not; I am the first and the last; I am He that liveth and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore." My dear friends, if you are found at the feet of Jesus Christ, He is waiting to lay his right hand upon you, and to say, "I am He that liveth and was dead; be not afraid; only believe." Mr. Brabane used to say, "Jesus Christ will never tread upon a worm that crawls at his feet;" therefore, my friends, all the encouragement is yours, because you are found at the very place where a sinner ought to be—at the feet of Jesus.

Then, secondly, all the encouragement is yours, because you comply with Christ's invitation. "All things are ready," and Jesus Christ sends his ministers to invite you to the Gospel feast. If you have complied with the invitation, your compliance shows that you have a right to all that He has provided for you. You have complied with the invitation of your Divine Redeemer; you have come to the Gospel feast, and do you suppose you are not welcome? Is there among you a mother who has a son at a distance? You make a feast, and you invite

him to come to the feast you have provided for him ; and when the youth, in whose countenance you behold the image of his father, passes by the window, would you not receive him joyfully, with all the tenderness and affectionate yearnings of a mother's soul?—would you not welcome him to the feast? And suppose ye that you can make your child more welcome than Jesus Christ can make the poor soul that accepts his invitation? and, therefore, I fearlessly assert, that you are as welcome as Infinite Mercy can make you. “Be not afraid, then, only believe.”

But you are also at the central point of all the promises. All the promises, as it were, concentrated into one focus, seem to look you in the face. The promises of God are not applicable to devils—they are not applicable to lost men—they are not applicable to sinners, as sinners; but peculiarly, personally, and particularly, to men at the feet of Jesus Christ, pleading, in faith, a sense of their want, and the greatness of God's mercy. You sometimes remark, that a well-drawn picture, wherever you go, looks at you; and so all the promises of God are a well-drawn picture; they look at you wherever you go—they always have their eye fixed on you—they are “all Yea and Amen in Christ Jesus,” to them that believe. “Be not afraid, then, only believe.” You are just at the place where you ought to be—at the feet of Jesus. All the promises look towards you—they all meet there. “Be not afraid, only believe,” and the salvation of these promises will be your own. You are at the feet of Jesus, and consider the excellencies of Him at whose feet you are: they are all excellencies exactly suited to your wants. You are at the feet of that Saviour who loved you, who loves you, who died for you, who arose for you, and lives and pleads for you, at

the feet of that Jesus who is able to save you to the uttermost. Look, then, at the excellencies of Him at whose feet you lie; and while you contemplate his excellencies, I would then say, Fear not, "only believe."

Now, will you indulge tormenting fear, you precious soul at the feet of Jesus? "Yes, sir, you don't know what reason I have to fear?" No, I don't. "You don't know the magnitude of my sins, and the multitude of my sins?" No, I don't. "If you knew the magnitude and the multitude of my sins, if you knew how conscience constantly brings home accusations against me, I think you would find that I had reason to fear." My dear brethren, every man, not at the feet of Jesus, has great and just reason to fear; but if at the feet of Jesus, he has no reason to be afraid. Suppose, my friends, your sins were more in multitude than the hairs of your head, more in number than the stars in heaven or the sands on the sea-shore, what then? Do you suppose that the multitude of your sins is greater than the multitude of God's mercies, and the magnitude of your sins greater than the efficacy of the blood and mediation of Christ? "As high as the heavens are above the earth, so are the Lord's ways above your ways, and his thoughts above your thoughts." And who knows how high the heavens are above the earth? Let Herschel apply telescope after telescope, and measure thousands and millions of miles, space is still before him: so are God's ways, as far as the heavens are above the earth, higher than your ways. Your transgressions are multiplied, but He can multiply pardons, and He will multiply pardons. Whatever may be the multitude or magnitude of your sins, I do not mind, if you are found at the feet of Jesus, in earnest and believing prayer, you may say, "Lay thy hand on me, and I shall live," take my sins away and

cast them into the waters of the deep, and He shall remove them as far as the east is from the west.

You may be mourning under the weight of indwelling sin—"Be not afraid, only believe." Fletcher said, when in Yorkshire, stretching out his arm rather farther than usual, a position he was wont to assume when speaking anything with great emphasis, "If I had," said he, "the sins of the whole world on my back, I could believe them away." "Be not afraid, then, only believe." Yes, but you say, "You do not know the peculiarity of my case." I will show you a description in the seventh chapter of the Romans:—"For that which I do, I allow not: for what I would, that do I not; but what I hate, that I do; for I know that in me (that is in my flesh) dwelleth no good thing; for to will is present with me, but how to perform that which is good, I find not; for the good that I would, I do not; but the evil which I would not, that I do. O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death? I thank God, through Jesus Christ our Lord." Fear not: "Be not afraid, only believe:" Jesus Christ can restore you. He heard Jairus's prayer, and cured his daughter—and many others in the days of his flesh—of bodily disease, and He can cure you of spiritual disease. Do not sink in despair, under the weight of indwelling sin? My dear friends, the seventh chapter of the Epistle to the Romans exactly describes your case. You have been journeying on, from week to week, in the seventh chapter, and you are now saying, in the last verse, "O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" "Be not afraid, only believe;"—you will soon pass on to the eighth,—“There is now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh but after the Spirit; for the law of the

Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made me free from the law of sin and death." "Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect? We are more than conquerors through Him that loved us." You that have been walking so long in the seventh of the Romans, I pray may now renounce it and come to the eighth: "Be not afraid, only believe." "Yes, but," you say, "I am labouring under peculiar temptations, struggling with evils, and I am a poor weak creature." Well, then, we sympathize with you; "Be not afraid," only be found at the feet of Jesus Christ. Whatever may be the power of your temptations, whatever their variety, whatever their malignity, Jesus, who was in all points tempted as you are, yet without sin, knows how to sympathize with you; consequently, whatever may be your temptations, do not sin, do not yield; "only believe," and He will deliver you out of them. Look, tempted soul—look on Jesus, and be saved!

"Yes, but then," you say, you are not in Jairus's case, who wept and said, "My little daughter is at the point of death; lay thine hand upon her and she shall live." Perhaps some father or mother may say, "My child, the pride of my eyes and the joy of my heart, is dead: I cannot go to the drawer but I see its little clothes. My beloved son, my beloved daughter, is dead: they are not at the point of death, but they have passed the point of death." Well, father, well, mother, "Be not afraid, only believe;" believe that your child was taken away in great mercy to itself and in great mercy to you; believe that the Lord saw dangers which it might fall into, and, therefore, took it from the evil unto himself; believe that the Lord saw that you were likely to idolize that child. In Oliver Cromwell's day, a pious woman had one only child, which fell into a well and was

drowned, and she exclaimed, with a broken and bleeding heart, "I see God is determined to have all my heart." So he has taken away your child that you might not rob Him of your heart and expose your child to danger. But are you sorry, father and mother, because your child has crossed the troublous ocean of life—that he has had a short voyage? Are you sorry because he has gone to be clothed with raiment which you could not provide, and to enjoy a happiness and glory eternal with God in heaven? Well, then, "Be not afraid, only believe;" deeply improve his departure, and be determined to overtake your child in heaven. "Yes," says another parent, "but I think my child is dead, in the worst sense of the word—dead in trespasses and sins. My child has been the heaviest curse I ever had in the world, he is my heaviest curse still; many a time he has caused my heart to bleed, and many a time I have wished I had never been a parent. My child perpetually does what I do not wish, and neglects that which I wish him to do; he is dead in trespasses and sins; and, unless saved of the Lord, he will be doubly and eternally dead in hell." Well, father and mother, I even say to you, "Be not afraid, only believe:" the Lord can lay his hand upon your child, and make him live. Jairus went to Jesus for his daughter: he pleaded, he interceded, for his daughter; he interceded with fervency and faith, and his prayers were heard. Fathers and mothers, come, with Jairus's desire and prayer and faith, to Jesus, and say for your child, "Lay thy hand upon him, and he shall live!"

I just called, a short time ago, at a house, having some little business to do with a cooper, and while I sat in the house he did the work: his wife said to me, "I have had a letter from the East Indies. My son enlisted three times, and we released him; he enlisted another

time, and we were obliged to let him go, when he was taken to the East Indies. We have often prayed for him, and interceded for him, and," with all the smile of a mother, says she, "God has at last heard our prayer, and he is now converted in the East Indies." Fathers and mothers, "Be not afraid, only believe"; and, whether in the Indies or in Botany Bay, the Lord will lay his hand upon him, and he shall live. While there is a promise of God in this book, "Be not afraid, only believe." "Trouble not the Master," says one, "the child is dead." "Be not afraid, only believe!" You do not know the Master. It never troubles the Master for a sinner to come and be pardoned, for a guilty sinner to come and be purified, for a tempted sinner to get deliverance; it never troubles the Master for a parent to come for his child. "Trouble not the Master," indeed! The Master likes such troublers; and may God grant that there may be many such here to-day! He likes such troublers, He loves to honour them! "Be not afraid, then, only believe." Come, then, my friends, and you shall feel the salvation of God. Come to Jesus; apprehend his character and offices; approve of Him cordially in your soul, and appropriate. Oh, for the glorious act of faith, to appropriate Christ to your own case! "Be not afraid, then, only believe." Tormenting fear darkens a man's soul, active faith bringeth light; tormenting fear says, My sins are too great to be forgiven; active faith says, God can forgive them, it can believe them away. "Be not afraid, only believe."

The great question is, Am I found at the feet of Jesus Christ? If I am not found at the feet of Jesus Christ, I have every reason to fear all my sins are charged against me, and all my temptations will have power; and if I come to the feet of Jesus Christ as a humble,

believing penitent, He will lay his hand on me, and I shall live; but if I be brought to the feet of Jesus, He will make me his footstool, and crush me down to hell. At the feet of Jesus may we all be found now! At the feet of Jesus Christ may we all be found on the morning of the resurrection! Then may He lay his hand upon us, and raise us to his right hand, there to share in his glory and happiness for evermore! Amen!

SERMON XIII.

THE DEATH OF THE RIGHTEOUS.

"The righteous perisheth, and no man layeth it to heart; and merciful men are taken away, none considering that the righteous is taken away from the evil to come. He shall enter into peace: they shall rest in their beds, each one walking in his uprightness."—ISAIAH lvii. 1, 2.

WHEN our Lord Jesus Christ was upon the earth as the great "Teacher come from God," He generally improved the scenery with which He was surrounded, and the circumstances in which He was placed. Those opportunities He seized, and, in a manner worthy of Himself, made them subservient to the grand end of his mission,—the glory of God in the salvation of souls.

One reason, without doubt, why He permitted Lazarus to die, was, that He might afford to that age, and to all succeeding ages, a striking demonstration that He was God and Man united in one person. As man, He groaned in Spirit, He was troubled, He wept. As God in man, He stood by the grave and "cried with a loud voice, Lazarus, come forth!" The mandate was immediately obeyed; and we behold, in the resurrection of Lazarus, that the Father and Jesus are one,—one in nature and in will. He, therefore, with the utmost propriety could say, "Father, I thank Thee that Thou hast heard me; and I know that Thou hearest me always." He then gives us a reason for thus audibly addressing his Father,—and, no doubt, for publicly raising Lazarus,—and that was, "because of the people that stand by,

that they may believe that Thou hast sent me." To imitate such a great example is a proof, not of arrogance, but of wisdom. In this case, as well as in others, "He has left us an example, that we should follow his steps." And it is our duty to "learn of Him," not only meekness and humility, but also to improve every favourable season and circumstance to the welfare of immortal souls.

The important cause which has called us together this day, deserves our most serious attention. Near the place in which we now stand, that eminent servant of God, Mr. WILLIAM BRAMWELL, fought his last *battle*, and gained an eternal *victory*. Near this place he took the last step in his mortal pilgrimage, and entered into the joys of eternity. To promote, therefore, the glory of God by improving this awful event, is the grand end for which you are now called together. The glory of God is an object which no man ought to be ashamed of pursuing; and I am confident, could the happy spirit of our departed friend be informed of our assembling together to-day for any *lower* purpose, it would, if possible, give pain to his holy soul, and cause a momentary interruption to his joy. If we exhibit some excellencies in his character, it is not to elevate the *man*, but to magnify the *grace of God* which made him what he was. We exhibit his character as St. Paul did his own, when he says, "I obtained mercy that in me first Jesus Christ might show forth all long-suffering, for a pattern to them who should hereafter believe on Him to life everlasting." With this object in view, I would now endeavour to improve the season and subject. *First*,—by calling your attention to some important particulars in the *character* and *end* of the righteous. *Secondly*,—by urging survivors to comply with the will of God, and so to lay the subject to heart as to gain present and eternal profit by it.

I. *I would consider some important particulars in the CHARACTER and END of the righteous.*

If we would gain a correct view of this interesting character, we must examine it with the candle of the Word of God in our hands, and we shall see that one essential particular in a righteous man is, that his sins are pardoned, and his soul "accepted in the Beloved; that he is justified freely by the grace of God through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus;" and that this pardon of sin and acceptance with God are obtained by believing on the Lord Jesus Christ "with the heart unto RIGHTEOUSNESS." This is emphatically called "the righteousness of faith," or "the righteousness of God by faith;" because faith is the divinely-appointed means or instrument that accepts of, and applies, the blessings of Redemption. "To him that worketh not, but believeth on Him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness." Learned men who understand the language in which the Scriptures were originally written, say that the term *righteous* means "just, innocent." Now these terms cannot apply to a man who has no personal interest in the Redeemer: he is unjust; he is guilty. But when a sinner, by the light and power of the Holy Spirit, *apprehends* and *appropriates* the merits of Christ to his soul, he is then as free from the final punishment due to his sins as if they had never been committed; and the Lord accepts of him as freely and as graciously as if he were perfectly innocent. "God is in Christ reconciled unto him, not imputing his trespasses unto him," and declares himself "just, and yet the justifier of him that believeth in Jesus." But then this faith is always *preceded* by a conviction of sin, by a hatred to it, by a sorrow for it, by a renunciation of it, and by a hearty willingness to be

saved from its guilt, its power, and its punishment, on the Lord's own terms. John the Baptist goes before Jesus, and preaches the baptism of REPENTANCE. He cries, "Repent! for the kingdom of Heaven is at HAND." Therefore, be not deceived; it is impossible for a man who loves sin and lives in it to have "the righteousness of God by faith." Sin must be renounced, if we would enjoy the *lowest* privilege of a righteous man.

Observe, also, that as this faith is always *preceded* by "repentance from dead works," so it is *accompanied* with the peace of God in the conscience, and the love of God in the heart. It is the channel through which "the love of God is shed abroad in the heart by the Holy Ghost given unto it." Hence, the character in the text is also called a "merciful man;" or, as it is rendered in the marginal reading, "a man of kindness or godliness." Now all these are the exercises of *love*, according to the different objects and causes which call them forth. Has love an object of distress within its view? it naturally exercises itself in mercy and kindness. Is its eye filled with a sense of the presence of God? then it naturally excites its whole powers in the exercise of godliness. Or, if we understand that a "man of godliness" is a god-like man, then we know he is a man of love; for "God is love; and he that dwelleth in love, dwelleth in God, and God in him." Such a man is therefore a regenerated man. He is born again of the Spirit; and has "put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness;" and is "renewed in knowledge, after the image of Him that created him."

Here, then, is a brief description of a righteous man; and what a Divine simplicity there is in the Scripture account of the first principles of true religion, as exemplified in the life and death of such a one! It does not

require amazing stores of learning to be a righteous man; then would the majority of mankind be excluded. It does not require thousands of gold and silver; if so, the mass of mankind must equally despair of enjoying his privileges. But it requires a man to repent of doing wrong; and to understand this, is within the reach of the meanest capacity. The poorest man, by the light of the Holy Spirit, can see his sin, be sorry for it, and renounce it. The most illiterate can understand this text: "Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts; and let him return unto the Lord, and He will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for He will abundantly pardon." To be saved, requires a penitent to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ. And what more simple in this respect, than cordially to take God at his word, and constantly to choose and act upon it? By Divine influence, how reasonable, how easy it is to believe the "record that God hath given of his Son," and to accept of salvation through Him! To be a righteous man, it is absolutely necessary that we love God supremely, and our neighbour as ourselves; and the weakest intellect (above idiotism) can savingly comprehend the first and second commandments, and, by that "grace which has appeared unto all men," the most depraved can fulfil them. We know that a man cannot of himself repent, believe, and love; but then we know also, that God has condescended to represent himself under the relation of a *Father*,—a rich, kind, and generous Father, who declares that He "will give the Holy Spirit to them that ASK Him." And who can say that he cannot understand this promise, and that he cannot perform the requirement necessary for its accomplishment? Therefore, my brethren, we can with pleasure inform you that we may *all* be righteous, we

may *all* perform the duties of the righteous man, and may *all* enjoy his privileges. We *all* may live his life, and die his death; and our last end and our future state may be like his. Oh, that *all* may be truly wise, and never rest until they fully answer the character in every particular. I may justly add, the death of such a man has now called us together. He was a *righteous man*, in the scriptural sense of the word.

1. His *creed* was the creed of a righteous man. The Scriptures were its foundation and directory. Whatever his mind discovered to be the will of God, as manifested in the Bible, so far his whole soul most heartily believed.

(1.) He cordially believed the Scripture doctrine of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, in one Lord Jehovah; in whom every possible perfection centres, in an infinite degree; who is the proper Governor of all his intelligent creatures; and who justly demands and deserves our supreme affection, worship, and adoration, our entire dependance upon his truth, our cheerful obedience to his laws, and a patient submission to the dealings of his providence, however painful they may be to flesh and blood. He believed that He will one day come and vindicate his claims before assembled worlds, and then "the wicked shall go away into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into life eternal."—Matt. xxv, 46.

(2.) He therefore cordially believed in the proper divinity of the Son of God, in the all-sufficiency of the merit of his sacrifice upon the cross for the sins of the whole world, and "the exceeding riches of his grace," by which He always delights to bestow the salvation of his atonement and intercession on fallen man. Indeed, with our views of Jesus Christ, if He be not God as well as man, the term *Saviour*, when applied to Him, is an improper one. If He is not God, there was no merit in

his death. And what can a guilty sinner do with a Saviour who is destitute of merit? If He is not God, we can expect no benefit from his intercession. And what can we do with a Saviour who cannot "save to the uttermost" by the prevalence of his intercession? If Jesus be not God, then He is not Omnipresent. And what can we do with a Saviour who is not a "very present help in time of trouble?" If Jesus be not God, He is not Omniscient. And what can we do with a Saviour who cannot read our hearts, who cannot "see our hopes, or know our fears?" We might proceed to other instances; but let these suffice.

But Jesus *is* God, and there is infinite merit in his death; and the chief of sinners may be saved, if he will accept of Him on his own terms. Jesus Christ is God; and, therefore, He is able to save "to the uttermost them that come unto God by Him, seeing He ever liveth to make intercession for them." He is God; and therefore He is always present with us, to hear our prayers, to supply our wants, and to save our souls. In a word, the Divinity of Jesus Christ is the key-stone in the arch of salvation, built across the gulf of ruin, over which sinners may safely pass from darkness to light, from guilt to pardon, from bondage to liberty, from Satan to God, from earth to heaven. This was a darling topic in Mr. Bramwell's ministry. It pleased him, and well it might, because it "pleased the Father, that in Christ should all fulness dwell; all the fulness of the Godhead, bodily," all fulness of merit in his death, all fulness of grace in his heart. His enlarged views of Jesus as an all-sufficient, gracious, present Saviour, made him delight to preach a full, free, and present salvation to a ruined world. I recollect to have heard him say some very striking things upon this subject, when preaching from

these words: "You, that were sometimes alienated, and enemies in your minds by wicked works, yet now hath He reconciled in the body of his flesh through death, to present you holy, and unblameable, and unreprieveable in his sight."—Col. i. 21, 22. He remarked that the humanity of Jesus Christ, that is, "in the body of his flesh through death," was a sort of MIDDLE PLACE, where only God and a sinner could meet; and there they *could* meet, and the union be so intimate and advantageous, that the soul could be made "holy, and unblameable, and unreprieveable in his sight." Oh, you honest-hearted, timorous souls, who long to be saved from the guilt and power of sin, look at Jesus with Bramwell's eyes, and your unbelieving fears will die; and your hopes, your love, your joy will live! You will triumphantly challenge every accuser, and ask, "Who shall lay anything to my charge? It is God that justifieth! Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died; yea, rather, that is risen again, who also maketh intercession for me." Romans viii. 33.

(3.) He heartily believed in the divinity and office of the Holy Ghost, and the absolute necessity of his Divine influence in the restoration of fallen man to the image of God. He believed that the Holy Spirit is the sun and soul of the Christian system, and that we have no more Divine light or life than we derive from Him. He was deeply conscious that it is the office of the Spirit to convince the sinner's conscience of the evil of sin, of his personal danger, and of the necessity and excellence of holiness.

He well knew that it was the work of the Spirit to reveal Jesus Christ to the awakened soul, as his "wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption;" that none but he could effectually take of

the things of Christ, and show them to the soul; and that none but He could properly silence the clamours of conscience, and seal a conscious pardon on the heart. He believed, also, that such a measure of this Divine influence could now be communicated, through the mediation of Christ; that the sinner could be "cleansed from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, and perfect holiness in the fear of God." I remember him preaching from these words: "Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that ye may abound in hope through the power of the HOLY GHOST." Rom. xv. 13. In his peculiar way he proved that it was the Christian's duty and privilege to experience the fulness of joy and peace, and the *abundance* of hope. The grand author, he said, was *the power of the Holy Ghost*, and the appointed means was *believing*. He likewise remarked that the complaints of some were, "If I had joy and peace, I could then believe. If I had a sense of pardon, I could then believe." He informed them that God's method was to fill the soul with joy and peace, not *before* they believed, but *in believing*; and that it was in the grand act of faith that the power of the Holy Ghost would more abundantly descend and apply the blessing.

His acute sensibility of the necessity and excellence of Divine influence in the soul, made him tenderly jealous lest, by any action, word, thought, or temper, he should grieve the "Holy Spirit of God by which he was sealed to the day of redemption." This also made him so importunate and persevering in his application to the throne of grace for a greater measure of the Spirit to be poured down upon the ministers, the word, the ordinances, and the people of God. He knew that ministers without the Spirit were trees without fruit; ordinances without the Spirit were wells without water; promises

themselves, without the Spirit, were clouds without rain; and the soul without the Spirit was like a body without a soul; nay, worse, a composition of everything "earthly, sensual, and devilish."

(4.) His heart most fully assented to the Scripture declarations of the high dignity and privileges of the Christian character. These are inseparably connected with the divinity and atonement of Christ, and the reality and glory of the Holy Spirit's operations upon the heart; and are the natural links in the chain of salvation, which follow each other in a regular and delightful order. How great, therefore, is the DIGNITY of the Christian character! He is an heir of God and a joint heir with Christ; an honour to which no man could have indulged an idea of aspiring, if it had not been revealed in the Word of God. And his PRIVILEGES do not disparage his dignity. When our departed brother surveyed them, he saw that it was every believer's privilege to enjoy a conscious pardon of sin; the entire sanctification of body, soul, and spirit; the perfect love of God reigning in the heart; the direct witness of the Spirit itself, bearing witness with his spirit that he is a child of God; a hope full of immortality; intimate and growing fellowship with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ; and a disposition and ability to perform every duty of piety and morality, his "light so shining before men that they may see his good works and glorify his Father who is in heaven." I remember one of his sermons, from Heb. v. 12—14, in which he severely censured professors for continuing in an infant state of grace, and thus living in a condition in which they neither could perform the duties nor enjoy the blessings of adult age. He seriously reproved those who, "when for the time they ought to have been teachers, needed

one to teach them again which were the first principles of the oracles of God ;” and when they should have been qualified to digest “strong meat,” were obliged to be fed with “milk.” This state is certainly not a state in which to rest. The slightest view of the precious blood of Christ, the riches of the Divine promises, the commandments of God, and of the whole economy of salvation by Jesus Christ, shows that “the mark for the prize of our high calling” is higher than a state of infancy ; and that we should be always aspiring “in the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ.” Oh, my brethren, I may here also propose him as a pattern for imitation. He did not set *others* a mark at which he did not aim *himself*. He did not point *others* a way in which he did not walk *himself*. Holiness of heart was the attracting object always in his eye, and he pressed towards it with uncommon success. He enjoyed very high measures of it ; and every step he took in life was *upward*, by which his *past* attainments lessened in his view. Though grateful for them, he did not think it was the will of God he should rest in them. His growing elevation opened new prospects before him, and he “forgot the things that were behind, and reached forth unto those which were before :” and thus his journey through life was a pleasing gradation from glory to glory by the Spirit of the Lord, until his ripened soul took possession of the mansion prepared for him in the kingdom of heaven.

(5.) His soul most cordially believed the Scriptures, in their testimony concerning the awful condition of a wilful, impenitent sinner. He saw his case drawn by the finger of inspiration, and his soul shuddered at the sight. This made him a faithful watchman to the house

of Israel; he, therefore, heard the words at God's mouth, and gave them warning from Him! He lifted up his voice like a trumpet, "and showed the people their transgression, and the house of Jacob their sins." I sometimes thought that the fire of his genius never blazed so bright as when he was addressing the sinner. He had a natural talent for poetry, and I have heard him speak, extempore, most striking paragraphs in a sort of blank verse, for twenty or thirty lines together, when he seemed to plunge the sinner into the midst of tormenting flames, and we heard him raving out the feelings of his enraged passions in the most horrid soliloquies. I once heard him preaching from the words of the apostle, in 2 Thess. i. 7—10. At that time he so displayed the terrors of the Lord, as to make our flesh cringe at his rehearsal; and we were ready to exclaim, "Who among us can dwell with the devouring fire? Who among us can dwell with everlasting burnings?" It was through the singular earnestness with which he addressed sinners, that many, by the grace of God, were awakened under his ministry, and cried out in the anguish of their souls, "What must we do to be saved?" And they never rested until the question was satisfactorily resolved, and they were enabled to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ to the saving of their souls.

2. But our departed friend and brother was not only a righteous man in his creed, but he was a righteous man in his *experience* and *practice*. Many are orthodox in their creed, who are heterodox in their hearts and lives. There are many who have a dead faith, which produces no works. There are many who know their Master's will, and who do it not. Conscience! I summon thee to speak the truth this moment, and say whether this is not the case with many who now hear

me! But this was not the case with the holy active Bramwell. His faith wrought by love; and his pardoned, regenerated soul loved God with all its powers, and his neighbour as himself. Love beamed from his eyes, and shone in his countenance. Love breathed in his language, and so seasoned his conversation as to cause it always to be with grace, and to minister grace to them that heard him. Indeed, the properties of supreme love to God were visible in the whole of his temper and deportment, and manifested themselves on every occasion when they could be exercised and displayed. I would just glance at a few of these properties, because our time will not allow me to enlarge.

(1.) We know it is natural for love to realize the presence and excellencies of its beloved. To these the eye of the body turns, and on them it fixes itself, when the object is present; and to them, in like manner, the eye of the mind turns, and fixes itself, when the object is absent. It still lives in the eye; and every new discovery of excellence is a fresh source of endearment and happiness. Its image insinuates itself into the soul, and impregnates every faculty with its virtues. This was most eminently exemplified in Mr. Bramwell's love for the Lord Jesus Christ. His eye was always fixed upon the presence and excellencies of his beloved. If ever man could adopt the language of the Psalmist, when he said, "I have set the Lord always before me, because He is at my right hand, I shall not be moved," Mr. Bramwell could. He appeared to possess such a soul-penetrating consciousness of the Divine presence, that external things, whether painful or pleasant, never seemed to interrupt the most lively recollection that the eyes of the Lord were upon him. "Living in God," "Living for God," "Living to God," were phrases that

he frequently used; and he uttered them with that emphasis which showed them to be the language of experience. It was his duty, his glory, his heaven upon earth, to realize all the meaning of such phrases in their fullest extent.

(2.) We know it is the natural property of love, to delight in union and communion with the object beloved. The supreme delight of love is either in the anticipation or enjoyment of union and communion with the object of its affections. This was Mr. Bramwell's joy and crown of rejoicing. His element was union and communion with God, and he was only happy when living in it. The lively consciousness of the Divine presence capacitated his holy soul for almost uninterrupted communion with the Father and with the Son. The spirit of prayer was a very active principle in his heart, and prompted him to the most solemn and direct intercourse with God in private devotion. How many hours he spent upon his knees in immediate converse with his Maker, will only be known in that day when "the books will be opened, and the dead judged out of those things which are written in the books." Perhaps it will not be asserting too much, if it be said, that, upon an average he employed six hours out of every twenty-four in prayer and other exercises of the closet. Besides this, through the whole of the day he was darting the feelings of his heart to God by perpetual ejaculations; and when in company with his friends, he was continually leading them "into the holiest by the blood of Jesus," and offering the sacrifices of prayer and praise.

(3.) Love, we know, is always zealous and jealous for the honour of the object beloved. Love is like a burning fire; and when the honour of its beloved is at stake, it collects all the passions as into a focus, and blazes out

with the flame of such ardent zeal, that a vigorous animation circulates through the soul, sets it in motion, and actuates it to use every means for promoting the object of its wishes. This ardent zeal always appeared in Mr. Bramwell's conduct. He was another Phineas; "he was zealous for his God;" and he counted no sacrifice expensive, no duty burdensome, no trial painful, if the honour of his God could be promoted. "Let God be glorified," was the constant language of his heart. He had no higher wish, he had no greater joy, than to see it in any measure accomplished. His talents, his influence, his reading, his studies, his prayers, his preaching, his all centred in this one point, "Let God be glorified! I ask no more." He did not "count his life dear to himself, so that he might finish his course with joy, and the ministry which he had received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel of the grace of God."

As he was zealous so he was *jealous* for the honour of his God. His love watched with jealous eye lest the Lord Jesus should be robbed of his honour, and a rival admitted into the heart of his church. His jealousy suspected that one was insinuating itself among us as a body, and that was the WORLD; that a criminal love was openly manifesting itself in a growing conformity to the men, the maxims, and the spirit of the world; and, as a certain consequence, that there was an increasing deficiency in spirituality of mind and entire devotedness to God. Now it is well known that jealousy, which is as "cruel as the grave," always caricatures and magnifies the object of its suspicions and fears.

So it was with the prophet Elijah. The revolt of Israel from their allegiance to the true God, and their estrangement from his worship, were viewed with a jealous eye; and he retired from the hateful scene into

a place where his heart could not be torn asunder by being a witness to the worship of Baal. When the word of the Lord came to him, and said, "What doest thou here, Elijah?" he answered, "I have been very jealous for the Lord God of Hosts; for the children of Israel have FORSAKEN THY COVENANT, thrown down thine altars, and slain thy prophets with the sword; and I, even I only am left; and they seek my life, to take it away." But the evil was distorted and *magnified*; and the Lord corrected his error, by informing him that He had yet left "seven thousand in Israel, all the knees which had not bowed unto Baal, and every mouth which had not kissed him."

So it was with Mr. Bramwell. At a certain period of his pilgrimage, he suspected that the love of the world was dividing our hearts with Christ; and he could not bear the thought. His imagination took the pencil, to draw the portrait of the hated rival. It rose to a monster before his eyes. It alarmed his fears; it biassed his judgment; it influenced his will; and, in the simplicity and sincerity of his heart, he retired from his circuit. It was at this important crisis that some of his brethren met with him, and enquired "What doest thou here, brother?" He might have answered with great propriety, "I have been very jealous for the Lord God of Hosts. I fear a criminal love of the world is rivalling Jesus Christ in the heart of his church; and, therefore, I thought my best course was to retire and try what can be done by me in another way." But when his brethren softened down the distorted features of the detested object, which his trembling hand, at the instigation of his jealous heart, had drawn, when they took off the deep shades with which he had overcharged its countenance, when they drew the picture of the monster

DIVISION, when they proved that, in the *present state* of the Methodist body, the evils of a schism and division would be much greater than the evils which he lamented and deplored, he then saw in some measure as they did. Conviction, like a voice behind him, cried out, "This is the way; walk thou in it." He listened. He obeyed. He retraced his steps. He returned to his work; filled his station with credit to himself and profit to the church; and lived and died in union with his brethren. However, his views, as they regarded our danger in this respect, were not entirely altered. And it must be admitted by the warmest admirer of Methodism as a system, and of the Methodists as a body, that this is a danger to which we are particularly liable.

Thus, in Mr. Bramwell the fruits of supreme love to God were visible to the eye of every unprejudiced observer. And as the properties of that affection appear in a variety of ways, besides those at which we have glanced, it would be an easy and pleasant task to enlarge on each particular, as it was exemplified in the temper and deportment of our departed friend. One thing more we must notice on this head, and that is, the love of God in the heart is the grand spring in the rational machine, puts every wheel in motion, and makes it move in cheerful and universal obedience to the commandments of God. The duties of morality are performed with pleasure and alacrity; and he who loves God with all his heart, finds it no difficulty, nay it becomes natural, to "love his neighbour as himself." So it was with Mr. Bramwell. His love extended to the most distant circles of society. These had a considerable share in his earnest prayers. But those who moved nearest the centre of his heart experienced the greatest measures of

the influence of his affection. He was not like a lion in his house, a king of terrors in his family; he was not a saint abroad, and a fiend at home! No; the partner of his bosom, the sharer of his joys, and the soother of his griefs, was dear to him as his own soul. "He dwelt with her according to knowledge, giving honour unto her as unto the weaker vessel, and they were heirs together of the grace of life: and their prayers were not hindered." As he considered his children to be so many parts of himself, he always felt the deepest anxiety for their best interests; an anxiety which was continually disburdening itself in agonizing prayers for their salvation; an anxiety which had its wishes consummated, in the answer of his supplications for their souls. So that he could say with the apostle, "I have no greater joy than to hear that my children walk in truth." May they always love and serve the God of their father; that his spirit may experience thrills of peculiar and increasing joy when they rejoin him in heaven, when they behold his glory at the right hand of God, and participate with him of never-ending delights! Such was his conscientiousness in the performance of family prayer, that, at a very early hour in the morning, he could not leave the habitation of his friend in which he had been hospitably entertained during the Conference, without uniting with the pious servant in the act of solemn prayer and praise. Thus he retired from the house with blessings in his mouth, only a few minutes before he stepped into the chariot of salvation, which waited, not many yards from the door of his friend, to take him home to "his house not made with hands eternal in the heavens." The poor of Christ's flock shared deeply in his generous sympathies; and though he commended a proper attention to the duties of our calling, yet his heart rose with dis-

gust at the unfeeling worldling. According to his ability, his liberal hand scattered abroad; and whatever he could possibly spare from his own resources he gladly appropriated to the noble purpose of relieving the necessitous. After his decease, his will was found, and what do you think it contained? Did it run in this form?—"I give and bequeath so many hundred pounds to George, and so many hundreds to William, &c." No: when perused, it was not found to be written within and without with large legacies to his children or his children's children; it comprised only a short account of his books, and which of them he wished to be distributed to the different branches of his family.

3. When we view the character and the corpse of our brother, we may safely adopt the language of the text, and say, "The righteous perisheth, and merciful men are taken away; they enter into peace, they rest in their beds, each one walking in his uprightness:" which leads us to notice THEIR END. In this description of their end, a variety of phrases are used. Some of them appear to apply to the body, and others to the soul. "They perish,—They rest in their beds," are phrases which apply to the body. The language of sense is, "They perish," they moulder into native dust. The language of faith is, "They rest in their beds," and there, in their graves, their bodies sweetly sleep until the morning of the resurrection. The other phrases apply to the soul, "They are taken away from evil, they enter into peace,—They walk in their uprightness," or, as the margin has it, "they walk before him." Behold the mercy of their end! They are *taken* away; not like the wicked, *driven* away. When the messenger death comes to the righteous, "He *gives*, not *yields*, his soul sublime, and closes with his fate." "Father, into thy hands I COMMEND my spi-

rit! and having said thus, JESUS GAVE UP THE GHOST." "Lord, now lettest Thou thy servant DEPART in peace," &c. In whatever point of view you look at it, felicity attends their departure. "They are taken from the evil to come." Many able divines have remarked, that frequently the righteous are taken away before some awful calamity falls upon the nation, or the church to which they belong; and that the Lord houses those who are ripe for heaven, before the fury of the gathering storm overwhelms the country with deluges of "lamentation, mourning, and woe." But if we look a little more closely to the text, we shall see that the words "to come" are added by our translators; and, therefore, in my humble opinion, the marginal reading is preferable, which says, "they are taken away from that which is evil." As for "evil to come," we will leave that in the hands of the Lord. "Sufficient to the day is the evil thereof."

(1.) One blessing in the end of the righteous man is, that he is taken away from the EVIL and danger of TEMPTATION. We know, whilst he is here, he is liable to the most dangerous temptations from the world, the flesh, and the devil. The roaring lion of hell is always "walking about seeking whom he may devour;" and the soul of one who has waged a successful war against him, would be a delicious morsel to his voracious appetite. Of all persons in the world, such a one is the object of his malice, envy, and revenge. Mr. Bramwell, undoubtedly, had no common share of conflict. He was a veteran officer in the army of "the King of Saints;" and the motto given to principalities and powers would be, "Fight neither with small nor great, save only with Bramwell. If HE fall, a host goes with him!" But he is taken away from the gun-shot of the enemy; and the

fiery darts of the devil shall never reach his holy soul again.

(2.) The righteous are taken away from the EVIL of SUFFERING, which is a consequence of the union of the soul with the frail tabernacle, the body. Many suffer long under a variety of pains arising from a sickly, feeble body. At even they are ready to say, "Would God it were morning!" and in the morning, "Would God it were evening!" But when the righteous are taken away, they bid adieu to all pain of body for ever. A peculiar emphasis appears to be placed by the Holy Spirit on this description of the happiness of heaven: "The inhabitant shall no more say, I am sick." Mr. Bramwell was unusually favoured in this respect. His health was seldom interrupted by sickness; and he tasted little of the bitter cup of indisposition, of which many take large draughts. In the time of his removal from this world, he was also peculiarly indulged. Never was Jordan's current smoother than when he embarked, and along its banks was never seen a narrower place than that which he was privileged to cross. He was not, as some have been, five or six weeks, or even a longer period, in passing over the river, "tossed with tempest and not comforted." No: in a few minutes he was wafted across the stream: so that we may justly adopt the language of Mr. Henry Moore, who emphatically remarked, upon the suddenness of Mr. Bramwell's removal, "We can scarcely call it DEATH. It is almost a TRANSLATION."

(3.) They are taken away from the EVIL of those SUFFERINGS which the soul feels from its union with, and love for, the church of Christ. How is the tender heart of believers frequently wounded to the quick, and bleeds at every pore, at the declensions of their brethren, and the guilt, danger, and folly of backsliders. To see

Jesus wounded in the house of his friends, is doubly painful to his faithful servants. They mourn in secret places over those who at once dishonour their God and ruin their immortal souls. But the righteous are taken away from those evils, and are at an infinite distance from them to all eternity. Hail, ye blessed souls who are taken away and gone to glory! No roaring lion starts from behind some thicket, of a season, a situation, or a temper suited to his purpose, to surprise, seduce, or seize your happy spirits! No news of sickness, pain, or death, circulates from one member to another, and pervades your feelings with painful sympathy, because a brother or a sister languishes in sufferings the most acute! No! every countenance blooms with eternal health, eternal youth, eternal beauty! Hail, then, ye favoured souls, who dwell in that happy country where every one loves his God with all his heart, and others as himself! There, the pain of viewing those fallen from God, with whom ye took sweet counsel, is unknown; and will be so for ever!

4. We might here enlarge, but the time calls us to speak more directly to the positive happiness of the righteous when they die. "They enter into peace." "Peace," in the mind of the Holy Ghost, as it appears written in the Bible, is a very comprehensive expression, including in it every sensation of pure happiness which a soul is capable of enjoying. "They enter into peace;" and the peace of heaven is that holy tranquillity of mind in which the powers of the soul rest with the most perfect complacency and delight. It is that pleasure and that joy which are felt when every faculty meets a suitable object, when every wish is lawful, and is fully gratified, and when the enlarging powers always find an infinite good in beholding the glory of Christ, and basking in the

light of His countenance, "in whose presence is fulness of joy, and at whose right hand are pleasures for evermore." We may have some *little* apprehension of the positive happiness of the saints in heaven, by the pleasures which those on earth enjoy. Many of the joys of "the spirits of just men made perfect" are in their nature the same as those which they once enjoyed by faith; only they are much *purser* and much *greater*. The consolations of the Comforter are on this account called the "earnest of our inheritance," "which," says Mr. Wesley, "is both a pledge and a *foretaste*." Our text says, "They enter into peace;" peace more abundant, both in measure and duration, than that which they enjoyed while in the body.

(1.) Into what pleasures does a soul enter, when it "is justified by faith, and has peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ;" when "the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, keeps the heart and mind through Christ Jesus!" But what is this to the PEACE of HEAVEN? When the *vessel* that holds it is pure, not only from sin, but from ignorance; when the *medium* through which it flows is so enlarged and perfect; when the believer sees God, no more "through a glass darkly," but "face to face;" and when the object of *vision* is so glorious and so interesting, who can conceive the happiness of a soul in such circumstances? The joy was great which our departed brother felt when he first knew that God was reconciled to him through the Son of his love: but what a scanty drop was that, when compared with the overwhelming fulness which he now enjoys, while with strengthened eyes he gazes upon the uninterrupted smiles of his exalted Redeemer! Our conception of it must now be very limited indeed; fully to understand it, we must enter heaven!

(2.) What peace does the soul of a Christian feel in fellowship with God's people, when he tastes the "communion of saints!" But how imperfect his joy here, when it is compared with that arising from the communion of saints in heaven! They will have much richer benefits to communicate, and a much readier manner of doing it: and the interchange of their views, of love, of joy, of glory, will be so perfect and delightful, that the Lord Jesus Christ will be abundantly magnified by the grateful adoring soul, for the rich provision of his house; and the mutual joy of the saints will make them sing with increasing ardour, "Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory, and honour, and power: for Thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created!" Oh, could we behold the exalted station of our departed brother; could we see how his heaven is increased by communicating his delightful sensations to all around him, and in return by partaking of their views and glory, methinks the sentence that would spontaneously drop from our lips would be, "They enter into peace!"

(3.) What peace do holy souls enjoy in communion with God, when closeted with the King of kings and Lord of lords, who is also their *Father*! How high their joys! How profound their peace! But this is trifling when compared with heaven. "Whilst we are at home in the body, we are absent from the Lord;" and the very pleasures of religion, while we are in this state, beget in us a greater desire "to be present with the Lord." Our departed friend enjoyed communion with God in a degree to which most professors are utter strangers; and his mind was "kept in perfect peace, because it was stayed on God!" He was seldom heard to relate his experience without making this observation,

"I am happier and happier every day, and I never felt such nearness to God, and such joy in God, as at the present moment." But what must be his delight now, when his communion with God is so intimate, so perfect! when he walks before Him clothed with the garments of salvation, and adorned with the robes of righteousness; when he beholds "the King in his beauty," and "drinks the living streams of bliss" which flow from that "Countenance which is as the sun shining in his strength!"

(4.) Not to increase any more particulars: What holy transport the believer's soul often feels whilst he is looking at the promises of God, and reading them as the *writings and title-deeds* of his inheritance, which at once describe it and secure it to him! The promises tell us that the land is a good land; and, when cordially believed, they afford an anticipation of it. But if the promises be so sweet, what will the possession be! If the mere description impart such animation to our minds, what will the actual enjoyment do! When the glorified soul stands upon the summit of mount Zion, and looks eastward and westward, northward and southward, upward and downward, and sees a *complete* deliverance from every evil and every enemy, and for *ever* so,—when he beholds a boundless fulness of everything that is desirable, and all his own, and for *ever* so,—what must be his joy! Surely, then, the language of the text is perfectly correct, when it speaks of the *end* of the righteous, and says, "they are taken away from evil, they enter into peace, each one walking in his uprightness;" and the natural desire of the heart is, "let me die the death of the righteous, and let my last end be like his!"

II. Attend, then, to the will of God in the removal of the righteous: and let survivors so lay it to heart as to

gain present and eternal profit by it. God intends that we should lay it to heart; He expects that we should lay it to heart; He speaks in the language of complaint and disappointment, when men will not thus improve the character and end of the righteous. "Laying it to heart" certainly does not imply that we should indulge inconsolable sorrow on their account. No: St. Paul forbids that. We need not "sorrow even as others who have no hope, for them that sleep in Jesus." Why should we? Their bodies are *at rest*, their souls are "taken away from that which is evil, they enter into peace;" and, therefore, we need not grieve beyond measure on their account. By "laying it to heart" is meant, that we should so keep the character of the righteous in our eye, as to make it a criterion for our state, and a copy for our imitation; and that we should so consider their end as to suffer it to be a prevailing motive, urging us immediately to the duty. We should "lay it to heart," and ask, "Is my creed the creed of a righteous man? Is my experience the experience of a righteous man? Is my practice that of a righteous man?" We should so lay to heart their life and death, as to learn the great and important lessons which they teach us. We should deeply consider the sinfulness of sin; that though it is *pardoned*, yet it is punished in the bodies of God's dearest children; and we should so consider it, as to repent of it and abhor it.

We should so lay it to heart as to see the necessity and excellence of holiness; that holiness which implies a freedom from sin, and the enjoyment of the favour and image of God, and which is the only qualification that can constitute us righteous in our character, useful in life, and happy in death. We should so lay it to heart as never to rest until we are righteous ourselves. There

is the same necessity for *us* to answer the character as there is for others. There is the same excellence in the character to attract *us* as to attract others. It is equally within our reach as it is within the reach of others. There is the same *grace* for us as for others: and we have the same *opportunity* which others had, who are now in the full enjoyment and exercise of it. Our sin, therefore, and folly, are very great, if the Lord has to say concerning us, "the righteous perish, and the merciful men are taken away, NONE LAYING IT TO HEART."

And here I would particularly address TWO CHARACTERS, and call upon them to improve the subject. As there are but two characters in the world, and there will be found but two in the day of judgment, I would now speak to both of them.

1. You who were the "companions of our valued brother, in tribulation, and in the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ," lay his removal to heart so as to have your minds awakened, your powers quickened, and new pulse and animation given, by which to "work the works of Him that hath sent you while it is day; as the night cometh when no man can work." Let us shake ourselves from the dust, gird our loins, trim our lamps, and go forth to meet the Bridegroom. The sudden death of Mr. Bramwell calls aloud, "Be ye also ready; for in such an hour as ye think not, the Son of Man cometh."

(1.) Could indignation and grief affect the saints in heaven, they would be felt in a very plentiful measure when they reflect how little they did and suffered for the Lord while here on earth. When they now behold the infinite disparity there is between the labour and the wages, the cross and the crown, the pains and the pleasures, their losses for Christ and their profits, they stand astonished that they were not "in labours more

abundant." Oh, my brethren, no doubt one hour in heaven will amply repay any man for eighty years' conflict, labour, and sacrifice in the cause of Christ. Lift up your eyes, and see the end of your toils! Begin to think and speak and act for the Lord, as persons who believe that God's labourers shall not sleep without their hire; and "be steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord. Behold in the *end* of the righteous, the joy of victory; and buckle on the whole armour of God, and "turn to flight the armies of the aliens. Be valiant for the truth on the earth. Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life." Your captain holds over your head the crown of life, through all your conflicts; and cheers his soldiers with the animating promise, "Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee THIS CROWN of Life!" Thus lay it to heart, and fight! conquer! die! and live for ever!

(2.) My brethren, let the death of the righteous awaken us to see the great necessity of an immediate and earnest application to the throne of grace, that the Lord would still bless us with the richest measures of Divine influence. It is related concerning the disciples of John the Baptist, that, when Herod had beheaded their master, "they came and took up the body, and buried it, and went and told Jesus." Now one part of their work we have done. As it respects Mr. Bramwell, we have taken the body and buried it. But have we gone and told Jesus? Oh, my brethren, the stroke should drive us to Jesus in deep humiliation and supplication, that it may be so sanctified as to prove a mercy and not a judgment. We should earnestly and particularly pray that a double portion of the Spirit may be poured upon us as a body in general, and upon our ministers in particular.

Our loss in respect to valuable ministers has lately been very remarkable. We have lost a BRADBURN, a COKE, a TAYLOR, and a BARDSLEY, men famous in their generation, who, with undaunted courage, bore the burden and heat of the day. And though some may say that nature was worn out, yet the loss to the church cries aloud, "Lay it to heart!" But when we look at the Minutes of the Conference for 1818, how must we be struck at the ravages of death among our preachers! The total number of the deceased is twenty-six, among whom our attention is particularly arrested by a HARE, a VASEY, a NEEDHAM, a BRAMWELL; men, in general, in the prime of life, and all of them in the meridian of their usefulness; men who breathed the spirit of primitive Methodism, and of primitive Christianity; men whose highest ambition was, to spend and to be spent for the good of souls. We cannot avoid exclaiming with the Psalmist, "Help, Lord, for the godly man ceaseth; for the faithful fail from among the children of men." Pray, therefore, for the prosperity of Zion; and especially pray for your ministers. They are the public depositaries of the gifts and graces of the Spirit, for the benefit of the church and the world: and their prosperity is ours. Let them be filled with faith and the Holy Ghost, and a Divine unction attends their labours, and the word runs and is glorified. Ministers destitute of the Spirit, are like empty storehouses: "The hungry sheep look up, and are not fed." But let them be filled with the Spirit, and they are like Joseph's granaries, richly furnished with the bread of life, which is gladly dispensed to a famishing world. Ministers without the Spirit, are like salt which has lost its savour, and is become insipid and useless. But let them be filled with the Holy Ghost, and whenever they open their mouths in the pulpit, they

are an opened box of alabaster, very precious ; a sweet odour of Christ perfumes the sacred place ; and the word of the Lord is "the savour of life unto life" to thousands. In a word, a minister without the Holy Spirit, is like a painted moon, there is no light, no life in him. But let him "be endued with power from on high," and he is like "the sun when he goeth forth in his might," diffusing light, life, and comfort to every one within the circle of his influence. Oh, then, let the burden of our prayer be, "Cast us not away from thy presence ; and take not thy Holy Spirit from us !" We increase, as a body, in knowledge, in numbers, in respectability ; but unless a proportionate degree of Divine influence be afforded, we shall not increase in the beauty of Holiness. Our knowledge will only puff us up ; our numbers will be an increase of half-awakened, lukewarm professors ; and our respectability will draw us nearer to the gulf of an improper conformity to the world ; and we shall soon have "a name that we live, and yet be dead." Oh, may our ministers, who are entirely devoted to the work, live near the throne of grace, and always have their lips touched with a live coal from the altar ! May our local preachers catch the flame from them, our leaders from both, and our members from all ! Then will the Methodist body be a pillar of fire walking through the earth, banishing the shades of ignorance, burning up the stubble of sin, and diffusing throughout every place "the light of the knowledge of the glory of God !"

2. To you who are unconverted, unpardoned, I call, in the name of the Lord, to lay to heart this subject and these circumstances, in that way which Divine mercy intends you should. Your case lay near to Mr. Bramwell's heart ; and should it not lie near your own ? Open your eyes to your real condition ; and

let the following subjects awaken the most serious consideration.

(1.) Consider your past life. Look at it in the light of the Scriptures; and what an awful spectacle rises before your eyes! A life of multiplied, diversified, aggravated sin; sins of commission, "in doing what you ought not to have done," and sins of omission, in "leaving undone what you ought to have done;" open sins committed before the eyes of man, and secret sins committed in the presence of God! Sins against the clearest light, and sins against the greatest love! Sins by which you have not only gratified the Devil in the ruin of your own souls, but you have been his successful agents in ruining others. Thus, a reviewing glance at the past will soon make you adopt the language of one of old, and you will exclaim, "Innumerable evils have compassed me about; mine iniquities have taken hold upon me, so that I am not able to look up: they are more than the hairs of my head."

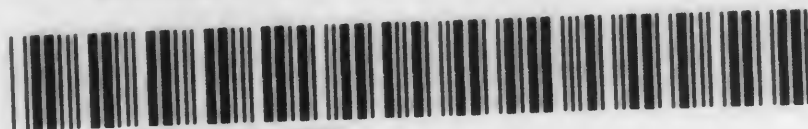
(2.) Consider your present state, and what striking subjects present themselves. Your consciences filled with the guilt of your sins! Your heart "deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked!" Your soul the workshop of the prince of darkness! Your members and faculties both of body and soul, "instruments of unrighteousness unto sin!" At this moment under sentence of death, you know not how soon it may be executed. And then, should that take place,—

(3.) Consider your future condition. You will be "driven away in your wickedness," and where Christ is you cannot come. He has the keys of death and hell in his hand; and He will lock the gates of heaven against you, and you cannot find admittance there. He will open the prison-doors of hell, and thrust you into that

place of torment, where, with fallen angels, you will be "reserved in everlasting chains under darkness unto the judgment of the great day," and then be brought forth before assembled worlds to be tried, cast, condemned, and executed, and to suffer death! the death of an immortal being! the death that never dies!

Oh, then, my brethren, let me beg of you to consider these subjects until they bring you to your knees before God, in the most undissembled confession of your sins, and in the most earnest supplication for mercy through the mediation of Jesus Christ! Oh, that it may be said of some this day, as it was said of Saul of Tarsus when he was awakened to a sense of his state, "Behold he prayeth!" And, perhaps, after you have added earnest prayer to deep consideration, you will inquire, "What must we do?" I answer, by the strength of grace, which is always given to a sincere suppliant, rise and declare war against all sin, and never, never more be reconciled to it. Then you may ask again, "What must we do?" I answer, present yourselves before the Lord Jesus Christ, and freely and fully surrender yourselves into his hands to be saved on his own terms, to be saved from the guilt, the pollution, and the being of sin, saved to the uttermost and for ever; and you shall not seek in vain. "He will have mercy upon you. He will abundantly pardon. He will bring you up out of the horrible pit, out of the miry clay, and will set your feet upon a rock, and establish your goings. He will put a new song into your mouth, even of praise unto our God." I pray that the season may be thus sanctified; and that the DEATH of one may be the LIFE of hundreds! The Lord grant it, for Christ's sake! Amen and Amen.

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